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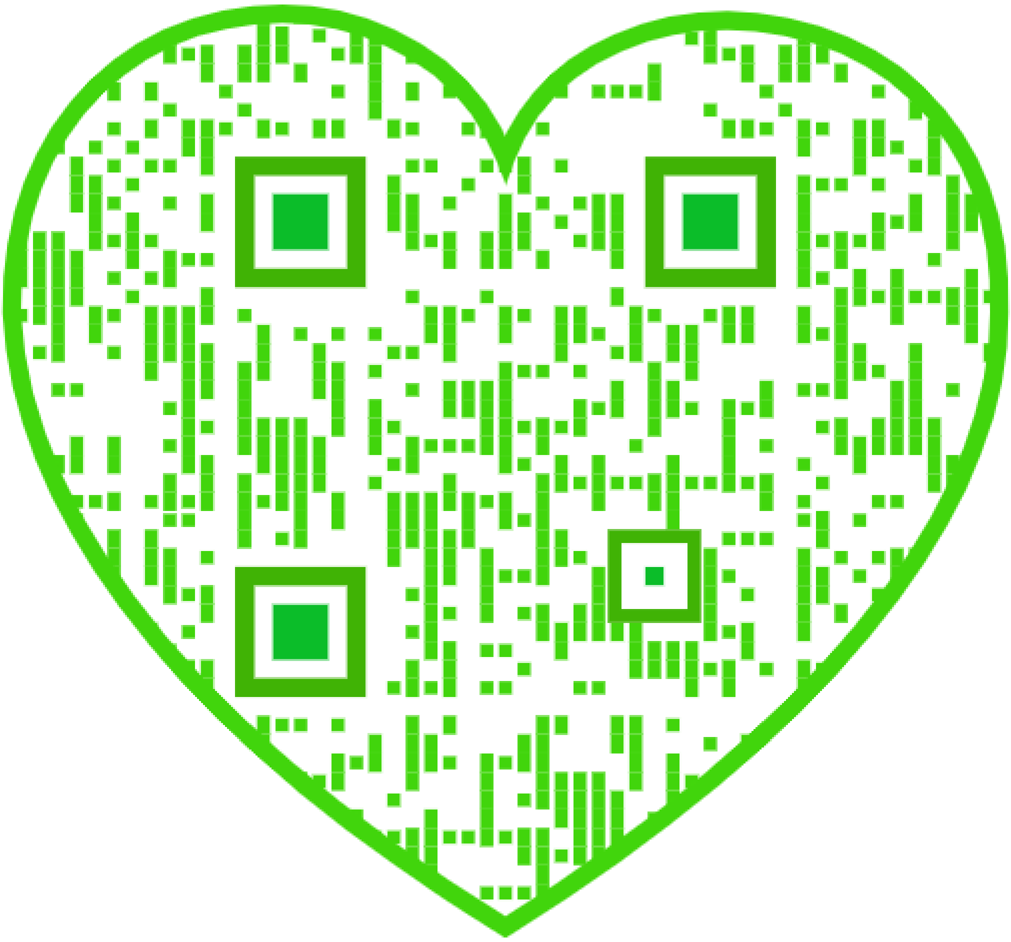

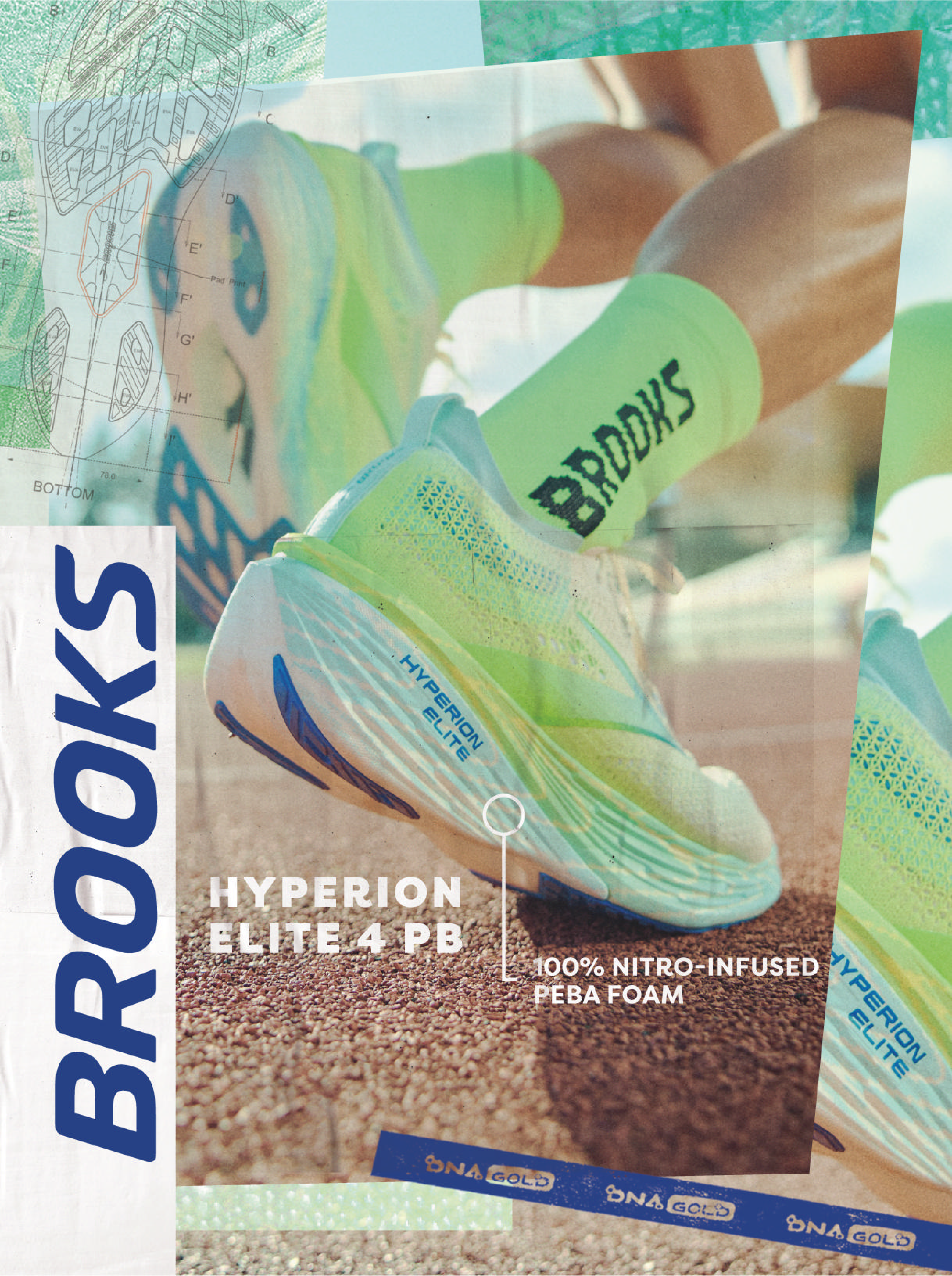
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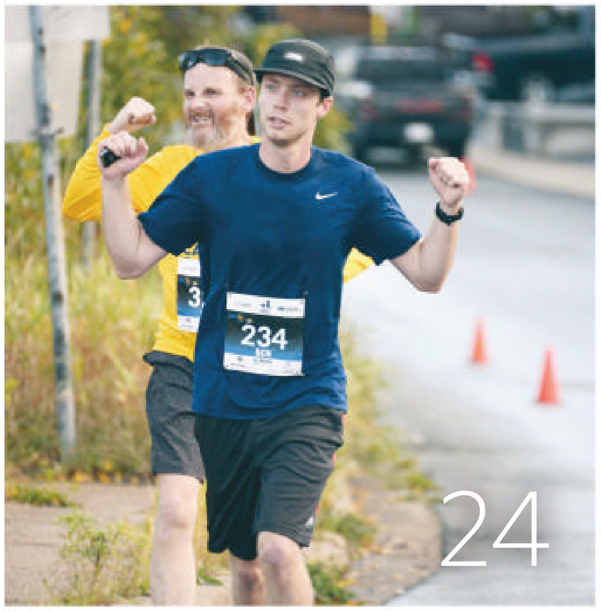

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36 Quinton Jacobs has staged a number of successful ultra relays from Toronto to the sites of major marathons, including Chicago and Boston. His next project, in Africa, comes with a bigger legacy—and bigger risks.

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Racing Against the Odds

44 Since 2019, Canadian athletes have consistently outperformed themselves, bringing home more and more medals from Olympic Games and World Athletics Championships. But the flaws in Canada's system for developing athletes and coaches in track and field mean those improvements may not be sustainable. Paul Gains explores the challenges and what they could mean for the future of Canadian athletics.

By Paul Gains

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Meet the Staff

Cory Nagler

There are serious runners, and then there's Cory Nagler, 25, *Canadian Running*'s affiliate marketing strategist. For example: he won southern Ontario's Georgina Marathon in 2023. His coach is multi-time national cross-country and 10K champion and 2021 Philadelphia Marathon champion Leslie Sexton of Vancouver. He has qualified for Boston multiple times, and was the seventh-fastest Canadian male at the 2024 edition. In December, he ran his 12th marathon, in Valencia, Spain, where he achieved a personal best time of 2:27.

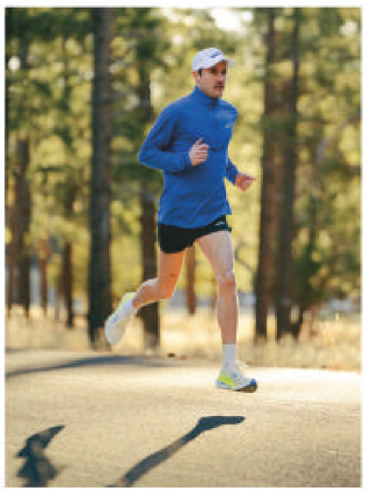
This was Nagler's proudest achievement as a runner, coming, as it did, after weeks of cross-training and physiotherapy for a stubborn case of plantar fasciitis. (He also became ill upon landing in Spain a few days before the race, making his achievement all the more impressive.) Nagler credits the support of his training partners at BlackToe Run Club and his girlfriend, Sophie, for his success.

If you ask him why he runs, his answer is no different than that given by runners of all levels and abilities: "I run because I love the shared pursuit of lofty goals and the feeling of accomplishment that comes from completing a training run or race," he says. "I think I'm a happier person when I go on my morning run; it gives me a sense of satisfaction for the rest of the day."

When he's not running or working, Nagler can be found cooking, sampling new varieties of hot sauces, binge-watching sitcoms or hosting the Run to the Top podcast. He also loves to travel and explore new places; seven of his 12 marathons were outside Canada. We wish him all the best with his running goals in 2025—and we are grateful for his contributions as an occasional shoe tester!

Speaking of serious runners, don't miss Paul Baswick's feature on Quinton Jacobs on p.36; Jacobs is a fascinating member of the international running community, and continually searching for new and better ways to contribute.

Anne Francis, Editor
@CanadianRunning



ON THE COVER

At Paris 2024, **THOMAS FAFARD**, 26, became the first Quebecer to compete in the Olympic 5,000m event and to reach an Olympic final in athletics. He also represented Canada at the 2024 World Cross Country Championships in Serbia and in the 5K at the 2023 World Road Running Championships in Riga, Latvia.

PHOTO Josh Thomson

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Beatrice Chebet smashes 14-minute barrier in road 5K world record

On the last day of 2024, at the Cursa Dels Nassos 5K road race in Barcelona, Spain, 2024 Olympic 5,000m and 10,000m champion Beatrice Chebet of Kenya broke her own world record, winning the race in 13 minutes, 54 seconds and becoming the first woman in history to run faster than 14 minutes over five kilometres on the road. Chebet set the previous record of 14:13 at the same race in 2023; in addition to her Olympic titles, she is also the reigning world cross country champion, a title she has won twice.

Shelby Houlihan returns to racing after four-year doping ban

On Jan. 14, American 1,500m record holder Shelby Houlihan completed a four-year suspension from competition after testing positive for nandrolone, a banned steroid, in late 2020. At press time, she was slated to race at the Razorback Invitational 3,000m in Fayetteville, Ark., on Feb. 1; she was also reportedly hoping to compete at the USATF Indoor Championships in late February and the World Athletics Indoor Championships in China in March.

During the ban, Houlihan was still able to compete in non-USATF-sanctioned races. In 2023, the former Bowerman Track Club athlete became the first woman to run a beer mile in under six minutes, breaking the world record with a time of 5:43.81.

THE WARMUP

New U.S.-based track series to kick off April 4

In June 2024, four-time Olympic sprint champion Michael Johnson announced a new pro track league consisting of four major events in 2025 and kicking off in Kingston, Jamaica, on April 4, 2025. In its first year, the series will distribute an astounding US$12.6 million in prize money. The league's name, Grand Slam Track, aims to evoke the prestige of tennis and golf's major tournaments, offering a standout series of events amid the regular track and field schedule and promising to boost the profile of the sport's most talented athletes.

Grand Slam Track will consist of 48 racers and 48 challengers; the first racer to sign with the series was 400m hurdles Olympic champion and world record holder Sydney McLaughlin-Levrone. Olympic 800m silver medallist Marco Arop is the only Canadian racer on the roster. R

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USATF
PROGRESSIVE

Kevin Morris

Should You Start a Run Streak?

The streak can be alluring, but beware the pitfalls

By Sarah Moore

Are you itching to take on a challenge that's not tied to a race that is months away? A run streak is one you can start anytime.

A run streak is simply the act of running every calendar day. The minimum distance might vary from one mile (1.61 km) to 5 km or more, and the time frame from weeks to a month to several years (the longest current streak in Canada, as certified by the United States Running Streak Association, is 46.02 years, and is held by Toronto's Rick Rayman). A streak can be a great motivator to get consistent with your training.

Here are some considerations to help you decide if this challenge is right for you.

Pros, cons and caveats

Starting a streak could be a fun challenge, provided you've been running a few times a week consistently for several months, with minimal soreness after each run. If those rest days are starting to feel long and your legs are getting fidgety, consider kicking it up a notch with daily outings.

Another reason to start a streak could be that you want to increase your mileage, but don't have time to add one more mid-distance run to your schedule. Adding a short, easy shakeout a couple of times a week instead can bump up your weekly total.

The last thing you want when taking on an exciting new goal is to get injured. Some preventative movements—mobility, plyometrics, weight training or other exercise—can help you avoid flare-ups when you're increasing the stress on your body with more frequent runs. If you already have a routine in place, it's a sign you could be ready to become a streaker.

Because the minimum distance (let's say a mile) can be knocked off quickly, a streak might seem straightforward compared to the hours-long sessions of half-marathon or marathon training. As with any goal, however, a streak can be more complicated than it appears, requiring creativity to plan for life's busiest days. That might mean running through an airport terminal in pursuit of a Strava upload, or dragging yourself outside or to the treadmill at a few minutes to midnight.

Potential pitfalls

Aside from logistical headaches, a common temptation is doing too much, too soon. The key is consistency, not speed (or distance, either). If you aren't used to running at a high volume, make sure to ease in by keeping runs at an extra easy pace while your body adjusts.

While you're at it, be kind to your body outside of running. A streak can easily become much less enjoyable if you do not prioritize good sleep, hydration and nutrition. A lack of recovery will make illness or injury more likely, which then might force tough decisions. What's more important—continuing the streak, or getting healthy quickly?

Running has many mental health benefits, and many runners get into the sport for that reason. But for some, turning a daily run into a formal streak can, over time, turn an enjoyable hobby into an oppressive obligation.

If that's not the case for you, and the prospect of built-in consistency sounds like an exciting challenge, the run streak may be perfect. Adding to a streak each day can bring immediate satisfaction compared to the long game of training for a race, and there's no post-race letdown—as long as you're excited to keep the streak going, the satisfaction never has to end. R

Sarah Moore is a writer and runner living in Halifax.

Building MOMentum

This organization is on a mission to support elite athletes as they start or grow their families

Many Canadian athletes with Olympic or Paralympic aspirations work regular jobs to support themselves while training. Add decisions around starting and growing families to the mix, and the financial challenges become even more daunting. In 2024, a group of female athletes took bold steps toward changing this with the creation of MOMentum, a not-for-profit that provides financial support for athlete moms and aspiring moms headed to a major Games.

MOMentum's founders, who include retired 800m Olympian and Canadian record holder Melissa Bishop-Nriagu, met while serving on the parental and pregnancy committee of AthletesCAN, an independent organization of national team athletes. They applied for, and received, an OLY Canada Legacy Grant of $10,000, and in 2024 disbursed most of the money ($1,000 each) among seven athlete moms who were training for the Paris 2024 Olympics or Paralympics, among them marathoner Malindi Elmore and 2023 national 5,000m champion Briana Scott. (They hope to increase this amount for the Winter Games in 2026.)

"The fact that MOMentum is building visibility and celebrating strong female athletes who also happen to be raising children is very inspiring," says Elmore. "I hope it continues to signal to younger women that they don't need to choose between being a parent and being an athlete in their peak years." Elmore mentioned the grant helped her family with extra childcare while she took part in an Athletics Canada training camp in Europe a few weeks before the Paris Games.

Malindi Elmore with her family

Jon Adrian

MOMentum co-founder Jill Moffatt (a two-time Olympian in rowing) says the money is intended not just for moms, but also for athletes considering starting a family or pursuing fertility treatments or adoption. "I have teammates who wanted to have kids after the Games, but it wasn't as easy as they thought; some went through multiple rounds of IVF," she says. "I had teammates who froze their eggs leading up to the Olympics. It really is not talked about...

"We glorify the journey and don't highlight the very real structural issues athletes have to overcome," Moffatt continues. "Women bring home 60 to 70 per cent of medals, and we say we believe in gender equity in sport and so on, but a lot of women cut their dreams short, because they also want to have a family.

"Athletes need money for treatments and medical care, and we want them to come to us. This is for any athlete with a family, or who is thinking about fertility or planning a family.

"If we could give $5,000 to any mom that applied for our grant, that would be amazing."

The organization is currently looking for a corporate partner to help them increase the support they can offer. (They also plan to apply for the next round of OLY Legacy Grants, which are given out to community organizations every two years, but applicants can apply only twice.) The organization also hopes to gain charitable status, so it can offer tax receipts.

"We're seeing a huge shift in Canada in pro sport, in elevating women athletes," Moffatt says. "A lot of people care about gender equity. It blows people's minds that we're not employees—that as an athlete, you don't have HR, you don't have a pregnancy policy. Those things don't exist. People are shocked when they learn that. There's an appetite to support women athletes, and we can provide something unique in that space."

For more information, go to *momentumcan.ca*.—*Anne Francis*

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Food

Nanjing Noshes

In honour of this month's World Athletics Indoor Championships, some Chinese dishes—with a Western twist

By Kim Doerksen

The 2025 Indoor Track and Field Championships will be hosted in Nanjing, China, from March 21–23. To celebrate, we pay homage to some of the delicacies found in Chinese cooking, adding a Western twist. Drawing inspiration from the five key flavours of Chinese cuisine—sweet, sour, salty, spicy and bitter—we have crafted a menu featuring dishes with ingredients found in your local grocery store.

To start the meal, we present an Asian-style Crispy Duck Salad, enhanced with vibrant citrus flavours and a Chinese five-spice rub. (Duck is a significant ingredient in many traditional Chinese dishes, and is valued for its symbolic, medicinal and cultural significance.) Complementing this is a simplified version of wonton soup, which can be prepared using frozen wontons from your grocer's freezer section. Wontons, and the soups they are featured in, vary by region in China and are often part of communal cooking traditions.

For dessert, we created sweet wontons, a non-traditional but delightful way to finish the meal. These bite-sized treats not only add a heavenly conclusion to the menu, but also make excellent use of any leftover wonton skins—perfect for those who prefer not to freeze the extras.

Asian-Style Crispy Duck Salad

Ingredients

1 large duck breast
1 tsp Chinese five-spice
2 tbsp hoisin sauce
1 bag mixed salad greens
1 orange, peeled and cut into one-inch pieces
4 tbsp pomegranate seeds
¾ cup mushrooms, chopped
1 medium carrot, peeled and ribboned
Salt and pepper

Directions

1. Season the duck breast on both sides with a pinch of salt and pepper and ½ tsp of the Chinese five-spice.
2. Heat a non-stick wok over medium-high heat, then place the breast in the wok, skin side down. Turn the heat down to medium and cook for two to three minutes or until the skin is golden brown. Note: do not add oil to the pan, as oil from the duck fat will help to cook the meat.
3. Remove from the pan and let rest for five minutes, then cut into thin slices.
4. With the leftover duck fat, add the chopped mushrooms into the wok and fry over medium heat until softened, about five minutes. Set aside.
5. Wipe the wok clean and reheat over medium-high heat. Add the sliced duck and cook until crispy, seasoning again with a pinch of salt and pepper and the remaining five-spice. Mix well and transfer to a paper-towel-lined plate.
6. In a small bowl, combine the hoisin sauce with two tablespoons of water.
7. Arrange the salad leaves in two bowls and top with oranges, pomegranate seeds, carrots and mushrooms. Add the duck slices and drizzle with the hoisin dressing. Serve and enjoy!

Kim Doerksen

Wonton Soup

Ingredients

Wontons

1 egg
6 tbsp water
2 cups all-purpose flour
½ cup frozen chopped spinach
1 tbsp pine nuts, toasted and chopped
¼ cup ground TVP (textured vegetable protein, or soy granules)

Broth

2 ½ cups vegetable stock
1 tbsp dry sherry
1 tbsp light soy sauce
2 green onions, chopped

Directions

1. Beat the egg lightly in a bowl and mix with the water. Stir in the flour to form a stiff dough. Knead lightly, then cover with a damp cloth and let rest for 30 minutes.
2. Roll out the dough into a large sheet (¼-inch thick). Cut out 24 three-inch squares and dust lightly with flour. Only 12 are required for the soup, so the remaining 12 can be frozen (place pieces of parchment paper between squares, then place in a sealed freezer bag).
3. For the filling, squeeze excess water from the spinach and mix in the pine nuts and ground TVP.
4. Divide the mixture into 12 even portions and place in the centre of each square. Seal by bringing the opposite corners of each square together and squeezing well.
5. To make the soup, bring the stock, sherry and soy sauce to a boil. Add the wontons and boil rapidly for two to three minutes. Add the green onions and serve.

Dessert Wontons

Ingredients

Nutella (or any other desired filling—cream cheese, nut butter, etc.)
½ vegetable oil, for frying

Wontons

1 egg
6 tbsp water
2 cups all-purpose flour

Directions

1. Beat the egg lightly in a bowl and mix with the water. Stir in the flour to form a stiff dough. Knead lightly, then cover with a damp cloth and let rest for 30 minutes.
2. Roll out the dough into a large sheet, ¼-inch thick. Cut out 24 three-inch squares and dust lightly with flour.
3. For the filling, take 1 tsp of your preferred filling and place in the centre of each square. Seal by bringing the opposite corners of each square together and squeezing well.
4. In a large wok, heat the vegetable oil over medium-high heat until shimmering. Place the wontons in the pan and fry for about 30 seconds before rotating. Repeat until the whole wonton is golden brown. Remove from heat and place on a paper-towel-lined plate.
5. Let cool, then serve with a sprinkle of icing sugar, cinnamon or your choice of dipping sauce (caramel is a great pair with a cream cheese filling).

Kim Doerksen is Canadian Running's *food writer and an elite runner in Vancouver.*

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The Marathon Diet

You almost can't eat too much food when training for 42.2 km

By Megan Kuikman

Signing up for a marathon means months of dedicated training that is likely to change your nutrition requirements. Here's what runners need to know about how to fuel when training for the marathon.

Periodizing nutrition needs

Most marathon training plans take a periodized approach; this means training sessions will happen in a series of phases, so that you reach peak fitness just in time for your race. In any given week, for example, a training plan will typically include one long run that is preceded (and followed) by a rest day or easy run day, and your nutrition needs will fluctuate accordingly. The two components that change the most from day to day are your need for calories and for carbohydrates.

Calories

Most runners recognize that marathon training will result in increased calorie requirements; however, unlike sedentary individuals who have fairly constant calorie needs from day to day, a runner should expect their calorie needs to change daily, depending on the training session. Many runners fail to recognize this, and eat too little on hard training days; then they experience rebound hunger the following day, potentially compromising both their performance and their health. Note that you may need to eat even when you don't feel hungry, since the demands of hard training sessions may suppress your appetite.

Carbohydrates

Carbohydrates are stored in the muscle and liver as glycogen and act as a fuel source during exercise. As with calorie needs, your carbohydrate needs increase as your training volume increases, and will also change from day to day, depending on training volume and the goals of a training session. To help match carbohydrate intake to the demands of training, runners should aim to consume a carbohydrate-rich meal both before and after long runs and hard workouts. (Examples of carbohydrate-rich foods include grains, cereals, fruit and starchy vegetables.) Increasing carbohydrate intake in the periods surrounding training will also help to meet increased calorie needs on hard training days.

You also need more protein

Endurance training also increases how much protein you need. In fact, endurance runners need twice as much protein as sedentary people. This increased protein requirement can easily be achieved through everyday foods; in most instances, specialized sport supplements are unnecessary. High-quality sources of protein should be spread evenly throughout the day, as well as post-exercise, to help with recovery. Examples of protein-rich foods are yogurt, milk, eggs, meat, tofu, beans and lentils.

How to fuel during training and competition

The body has limited carbohydrate stores. When these stores are depleted, runners may "hit the wall," with a decline in performance. To help avoid this, in addition to consuming a carbohydrate-rich meal pre-exercise, carbohydrate should be consumed during a marathon, with the goal of consuming 60–90 grams per hour of exercise. This equates to around two to four gels per hour, depending on the carbohydrate content of the gel. However, just as muscles need training for race day, the gut also needs to be trained. Runners should practise their in-race fuelling plan during weekly long runs in the build-up to a marathon. This will not only prevent "hitting the wall," but will also reduce the risk of gastrointestinal disturbances on race day.

Training for and completing a marathon puts a physiological stress on the body that in turn influences nutrition requirements. Changes in training should be accompanied by changes in diet, so that runners can toe the start line healthy and ready to perform at their best.

Megan Kuikman is an avid runner and registered dietitian with a passion for sports nutrition. She is currently completing her PhD with an aim to address gender gaps in exercise science research. She can be reached at hello@megankuikmanrd.ca.

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How to get more out of your gym sessions

By Jon-Erik Kawamoto

I always like to compare strength training with banking. The goal for both is to improve your return on investment (ROI). It would be a shame to habitually spend hours in the gym, only to reap a portion of the available benefits. You don't need to be an expert in the gym to get the most out of your strength workouts. Apply these six tips and watch your strength-training ROI improve.

Tip 1

Form comes first

Improving your skill at executing exercises will improve your ROI and minimize your injury risk. Use my Body Work routines as a start, find reputable videos online or hire a strength and conditioning coach, kinesiologist or credible personal trainer to teach you correct techniques for lifting exercises. A coach can also assess your current strength levels, mobility and running gait to see if additional exercises may benefit you.

Tip 2

Weight lifted comes second

Once you have put in the time and effort to learn correct technique, focus on how much weight you are going to use. A good rule of thumb is to ask yourself if you can do one or two more repetitions with good form at the end of your set. For example, if the workout asks you to do 12 repetitions, ask yourself at the end of the set if you could have done 13 or 14 reps with good form, but not 15. These are the criteria I would use to judge the appropriate weight. If you only completed eight reps but the workout asked you to do 12, the weight is too heavy. If you completed 12 reps but could have continued to 18 reps, the weight is too light, so go heavier in your next set.

Tip 3

Rep speed comes third

I've seen many runners moving weights either too fast or too slow. When learning exercises or if you're new to strength training, follow this rep speed (AKA tempo): two seconds to lower the weight, slight pause in the bottom position, one second to return the weight to the beginning position and a slight pause in the top position before performing the next rep. (Some exercises, such as plyometrics, should be performed with intensity, but these are for more experienced runners/lifters.)

Tip 4

Develop a mind-muscle connection

Once you have dialled in tips 1 through 3, focus on the target muscles for each exercise. This tip mainly applies to single-joint exercises or isometric-hold exercises, such as calf raises, glute bridges, front planks and hip abductions. You can maximize the effectiveness of each rep by focusing on squeezing or contracting the target muscle to your best ability. This will ensure the stress of the exercise goes to the correct muscle with minimal involvement of muscle agonists. More stress to the target muscle means more strength developed and an increase in ROI.

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REP
REP
REP
REP

JP Mullowney

Tip 5

Stand on stable ground to build more strength

Twenty years ago, the fitness industry was obsessed with challenging the core by doing standard exercises on an unstable surface (such as a BOSU or balance pad). The idea was the lifter would use more of their core musculature to make up for the reduced stability, but research has since found that this impedes strength gains. There is a time and place for unstable-surface training (such as when rehabbing an ankle sprain, for example), but if strength development is the goal, stand on stable ground.

Tip 6

Wear appropriate shoes

Highly cushioned running shoes are of little benefit in the gym. Ideally, runners should lift weights in minimalist shoes with an anatomically shaped toe box (wider than a traditional cross-training shoe). Your feet have muscles too, which also need to be strong, just like your glutes, quads and calves. Wearing a low-profile, zero-drop shoe with a wide toe box in the gym allows your foot to move more naturally, with your toes splaying with every step or lunge. The more your bones and muscles can move and respond during exercise, the stronger your feet can become. R

Jon-Erik Kawamoto, MSc, CK, CSCS, is a certified kinesiologist, strength and conditioning coach, a regular contributor to Canadian Running *and owner of JKC, a small group personal training company in St. John's, N.L. Find out more at* jkconditioning.com.

THE SCIENCE OF RUNNING

ALEX HUTCHINSON ROUNDS UP THE LATEST IN ENDURANCE RESEARCH

The Norwegian Method, Tested

How to understand the real point of the double threshold workout

Jakob Ingebrigtsen

Kevin Morris

See if you can guess the results of this recent study from scientists in Norway. They had runners do a workout of six times 10-minute intervals with two minutes' recovery. In one condition, they did the workout all at once; in the other, they took a six-and-a-half-hour break halfway through the workout. Which one was easier? And which one was better?

The first answer is obvious: it was physically and mentally easier to split the workout into two parts. The second is more nuanced. In fact, it's the key question underlying the popularity of what has become known as the "Norwegian method" of endurance training, an approach made famous by track star Jakob Ingebrigtsen, triathlete Kristian Blummenfelt and others. The study, which was published in *Frontiers in Physiology* by a team led by Rune Kjøsen Talsnes of the Norwegian University of Science and Technology, is one of the first attempts to test the science behind the hottest training trend of the current moment.

What is Norwegian training?

There are two key elements of the Norwegian approach that tend to garner most of the attention. One is the idea of "double thresholds," which involves doing two separate medium-intensity interval workouts on the same day, morning and afternoon. Top athletes like Ingebrigtsen do this twice a week, often on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

The second element is the use of lactate testing, which involves drawing a pinprick of blood from the fingertip or earlobe periodically during the workouts. This is to ensure that you stay at the desired intensity level, somewhere near or just below your lactate threshold. The idea is that double thresholds (which seem like a recipe for overtraining) become feasible if (and only if) you can control the intensity and avoid pushing too hard. The frequent lactate tests guard against the dangers of overenthusiasm.

But, according to veteran endurance sports journalist Brad Culp, by fixating on double thresholds and lactate testing, we risk missing the broader context of Norway's recent endurance success. Culp recently published a new book called *The Norwegian Method: The Culture, Science & Humans Behind the Groundbreaking Approach to Elite Endurance Performance*. In it, he traces the roots of Norwegian training all the way back to—wait for it—the Vikings rowing their longboats across oceans, presumably at just the right sustainable intensity.

Culp also credits earlier generations of Norwegian athletes, like record-setting 1980s marathoners Grete Waitz and Ingrid Kristiansen, for setting the stage. And he believes that Norwegian culture, including concepts like *friluftsliv*, which basically means "open-air life," help the country punch above its weight athletically. It's not enough, in other words, to just buy a lactate monitor and start doing double thresholds. You have to understand what the deeper aim is.

The lactate testing, in Culp's view, is really about intensity control—something that Viking rowers had to learn, and that athletes like Kristiansen understood intuitively. Running today's workout a little faster is only a good thing to the extent that it doesn't interfere with tomorrow's workout. Lactate tests are a fancy and seemingly objective way of achieving this aim, but the general principle can be adopted by anyone.

And the double thresholds are really about training volume. Decades of research by Norwegian sports scientists have supported the idea that success in endurance sports is a matter of accumulating as much training load as possible. Even though Talsnes's study compared single and double workouts with the same overall volume, the real point of double thresholds isn't to make the same old training feel easier; it's to enable you to train more without burning out. (Ingebrigtsen famously claims that he racks up about 30 per cent more training than most of his rivals.)

What did the study find?

Superficially, the single threshold in Talsnes's protocol was "better," in that it imposed greater physiological stress. Heart rate, lactate levels and perceived effort all drifted upward during the second half of the workout. In contrast, when the workout was split in two, heart rate and lactate were actually *lower* in the afternoon than they'd been in the identical morning workout. If you're looking for a training stimulus to get fitter, the single workout packs more punch for a given training volume.

The flip side of the coin, of course, is that the runners recovered more quickly from the double workouts. The following morning, they felt less fatigued and less sore. That means they could have done more. Perhaps a better comparison would have been six 10-minute reps in a single workout versus two workouts with four rather than three reps each. That way, you absorb a greater total training load, but still recover just as quickly as you would have from the single workout. (That's where Ingebrigtsen gets his extra 30 per cent.)

Talsnes's study is almost certainly the first of many on this topic. Exactly how much more training does the double threshold approach allow you to pack in? Is there a downside in lost sprint speed from all the threshold training? That's a concern that surfaced after Ingebrigtsen was outsprinted in the final straightaway of the 1,500 metres at both the 2023 World Championships and the 2024 Olympics.

But the big-picture takeaway from Norway's success is already clear. As Culp points out, it's about the strategies of intensity control and volume, not the mere tactics of lactate and double thresholds. Control your intensity, and you'll be able to train more; run easier so that you can train harder. It's a paradoxical message that many great athletes and coaches have discovered and tried to share over the years. But it seems to be one that each new generation needs to learn afresh, and that many runners never quite manage to get the hang of. Culp quotes a thousand-year-old Norse saga to make the point: "A person should not agree today to what they'll regret tomorrow."

Alex Hutchinson is a Toronto journalist specializing in the science of running and other endurance sports, and the author of Endure: Mind, Body, and the Curiously Elastic Limits of Human Performance *(now in paperback).*

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How to Break Through

If you're having trouble making running enjoyable, you could be trying to do too much too soon

By Shannon Lough

There is a magical, yet elusive moment in every runner's practice when everything clicks. The movement no longer feels forced, and it might even be described as tranquil or Zen-like. Once they break through to this stage, they will chase that feeling every time they think of lacing up.

For many, achieving that state can seem improbable. But according to the two coaches we consulted, the breakthrough is possible with the right approach.

Olympic medallist Lynn Kanuka of White Rock, B.C., has been coaching for 40 years with a well-established learn-to-run program. Kanuka says the common mistakes people make in their search for enjoyment in running are that they try to run too far, too fast.

"Step after step is really hard on the body," Kanuka says. "How do you get over that? You slow down, you follow a program, and ideally, you need to have a walk/run experience."

Even if you're a swimmer or a cyclist and you have a good engine and good overall fitness, your body needs to train for the impact of running. (When you're running, you're airborne, and your body absorbs the impact of around three times your body weight every time you land, depending on how fast you're going. That impact takes some getting used to.)

Kanuka recommends starting with a 1:2 approach—one minute of shuffling, where you shorten your stride, tighten your arm swing, your feet land under your hips and there's a lightness in your step; then, two minutes of walking. Start there, and slowly increase.

"It should take someone who hasn't been doing any running two to three months, effectively eight weeks, to run 5 km," Kanuka says.

Joe Chappell, who has been coaching for more than 20 years and is based in Saugeen Shores, Ont., raises another challenge confronting new and returning runners—the bombardment of training advice on social media and in fitness groups. The best way to avoid getting caught up in the jargon is to keep it simple, and to do less, Chappell says. Build your foundation for the first two months by running at an easy enough pace that you can carry on a conversation, and create consistency.

"Find the time available in your life," Chappell suggests. "If someone runs Monday and Thursday every week, the first few times might not be comfortable or fun. Don't add intensity until it becomes routine. Let the body adapt."

He suggests setting a range, like 3–5 km, since every day will feel different. Only when you're consistently reaching the top end of the range and it feels good should you progress to (slightly) longer distances.

Both coaches encourage joining a running group, but advise caution. Kanuka points out that group programs don't always cater to people who are just learning to run. Look for a weekly learn-to-run group with a progressive walk/run program; the social aspect could definitely make running more fun. Chappell suggests finding a group with an out-and-back route plan, which communicates it's OK to be at different speeds.

The last bit of advice is the mental piece. By creating positive memories of a run, you're more likely to get excited for your next training day. Kanuka recommends getting off the treadmill; get outside and explore a beautiful trail while running, or shuffling, light and easy.

"If you have that vision, you're more likely to create that for yourself," she says.

Shannon Lough is a writer and yoga instructor based on Ontario's Lake Huron coast. Her long-term running habit has taken her up mountains, along rivers and across islands.

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Put (a) Spring Back Into Your Step

Workouts await, but be wise about returning to speedwork

By Andrew McKay

For many runners, the re-emergence of spring signals the *real* new year, when it's time to kick things up a notch, get back into gear and start pushing the pace a little more.

This includes returning to heavier workouts. Where winter is often a time for rest, easier runs and mileage maintenance, the spring thaw offers the promise of faster footwork and harder efforts as we prepare for target races in late spring or early summer.

It's repeated so often that it's almost cliché, but for good reason: when returning to hard work, less is more. Trying to jump back to paces and efforts that you haven't seen since the clocks turned back is a recipe for injury.

Tim Uuksulainen has coached at several collegiate and community clubs in Ontario and now focuses on individual runners in the Guelph, Ont., area. His rule of thumb is: the more you've eased off the intensity, the slower you should build back up. (This applies to both mileage and intensity.)

It's tempting to try to jump back into tough workouts, especially if you finished the previous season with good results and you want to keep progressing. But Uuksulainen recommends jumping into a short race or timed effort a month or two after beginning your build, to establish a baseline for your goal pace. "When coming out of a maintenance phase, the focus should be on gradually increasing effort while listening to your body," he says. "You can start with time trials early on, to gauge where you're at before jumping into harder workouts."

Uuksulainen also recommends introducing effort into different types of runs to help the body re-acclimatize to the demands of speed.

"For those who've been running at reduced mileage, aim to slowly add a few kilometres each week, holding steady every few weeks before increasing again. Even if you've scaled back, you can incorporate smaller speed elements into your long runs to re-introduce intensity."

He suggests that, even for shorter runs, runners should find a way to maintain a semblance of difficulty. "I don't think it's good to totally lay off any kind of speedwork," Uuksulainen says. "Things like strides keep your primary muscles and fibres tuned up."

Long runs are integral elements of any training plan. Uuksulainen says they're also pivotal in helping runners get ready for full-fledged workouts. "A long run teaches muscular endurance and prepares your body to handle extended energy use," he says. "Starting small with intervals, like 3 x 3 minutes at moderate intensity during a long run, can help build endurance and re-introduce harder efforts gradually."

If you're in a running group that focuses on one weekly group training session, you might be focused on getting back to prime condition for those workouts. Uuksulainen advises runners to to take a more holistic view of how to get up to speed. "Workouts should include runs at various paces to target all energy systems, like slow aerobic runs, intervals and medium-paced runs, to build endurance and strength incrementally," he says.

Most importantly, he says runners returning to hard efforts need to be realistic, and to understand the long-term benefits that arise from short-term difficulty.

"You may not feel fantastic initially, but training consistently over months builds resilience and prepares you for more intense efforts later," he says. "Gradually adding mileage and intensity creates a road map to get back into training safely without overwhelming yourself."

Andrew McKay is a Toronto runner and freelance writer.

FOREVER. FASTER.
FOREVERRUN 2
STABILITY IN MOTION
NITRO
NITRO

Rossland, B.C.

This mountain town near the U.S. border has so much runnable singletrack, you can explore for days

By Steve Edgerton

Tucked high in the Monashee Mountains just minutes from the B.C./Washington border, Rossland is the mountain town that all other mountain towns strive to be. Its storied embrace of outdoor adventure persists in its endless network of skiing and hiking trails, an iconic collection of rustic backcountry cabins and a passionate community that lives and breathes mountain sports.

Once best known as a ski town (it has some of the most exceptional snow conditions and skiable terrain on the continent), Rossland has evolved into a veritable all-season outdoor destination, now regarded just as well for world-class trails as it is for skiing. Bring the mountain bike along for an unbeatable multi-sport summer trip. Or maybe don't—there's so much singletrack that just running will keep you very busy. Here are a few good places to start.

Easy

For a quick rip right from town, it's hard to beat the Techno Grind and Kootenay Columbia Loop around the modest summit of Monte Christo on Rossland's northern border. The 5-km route includes nearly 200 metres of vertical gain on technical singletrack. Take Techno Grind on the way out and Kootenay Columbia Trail, to go against the typical flow of bike traffic.

Moderate

If you're ready for a little more alpine exposure, drive north of Rossland along Highway 3B to take on Old Glory Trail up to the summit of Mount Kirkup. This 12-km out-and-back features 650 metres of climbing, and the well-graded Old Glory Trail is perfect for downhill running.

You can also add a few kilometres and turn this into a nice loop. Coming off Mount Kirkup, continue on the Seven Summits Trail, past the junction for Old Glory Trail. Enjoy a short stretch of ridge running before turning onto Plewman Trail for a fun descent that will deposit you back at the same trailhead.

Steven Wells, Tourism Rossland/Ryan Flett

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Advanced

Rossland's Seven Summits Trail resides in the uppermost echelon of Canadian trails. Constructed by the Kootenay Columbia Trails Society (KCTS) in 2004, it became an instant classic for local mountain bikers and trail runners. Seven Summits is classed as an "Epic" trail by the International Mountain Biking Association and serves as the route for the Broken Goat, Rossland's signature trail race, which sells out almost immediately every year.

The 30-km point-to-point route traverses the Rossland Range through a sublime mix of aromatic montane forests and heavenly alpine meadows, serving up a megadose of euphoria-inducing ridge running along the way. While the official trail does not actually ascend any of its eponymous seven summits, peak-baggers keen for an even bigger day out can make detours up Mount Plewman, Old Glory Mountain, Mount Kirkup or Granite Mountain. But the 30-km trail alone makes for a demanding and remote day in the mountains, and a bucket-list-worthy run on its own.

Steve Edgerton is a freelance writer and trail runner based in Calgary.

DESTINATION
ROSSLAND, BRITISH COLUMBIA

Details

HOW TO GET THERE: Rossland is a 30-minute drive from Castlegar, where the West Kootenay Regional Airport offers limited flights to and from Vancouver.

LOCAL RACES: The Broken Goat Ultra, held every July, features 50K, 25K and 12K distances. The route includes the Seven Summits Trail, a few of the surrounding peaks and the trail system at Red Mountain Resort. The 50K is one of the most popular and challenging ultras in the province. (*pacesportsfitness.com*)

WEBSITE: *tourismrossland.com*

Steven Wells, Courtesy Broken Goat

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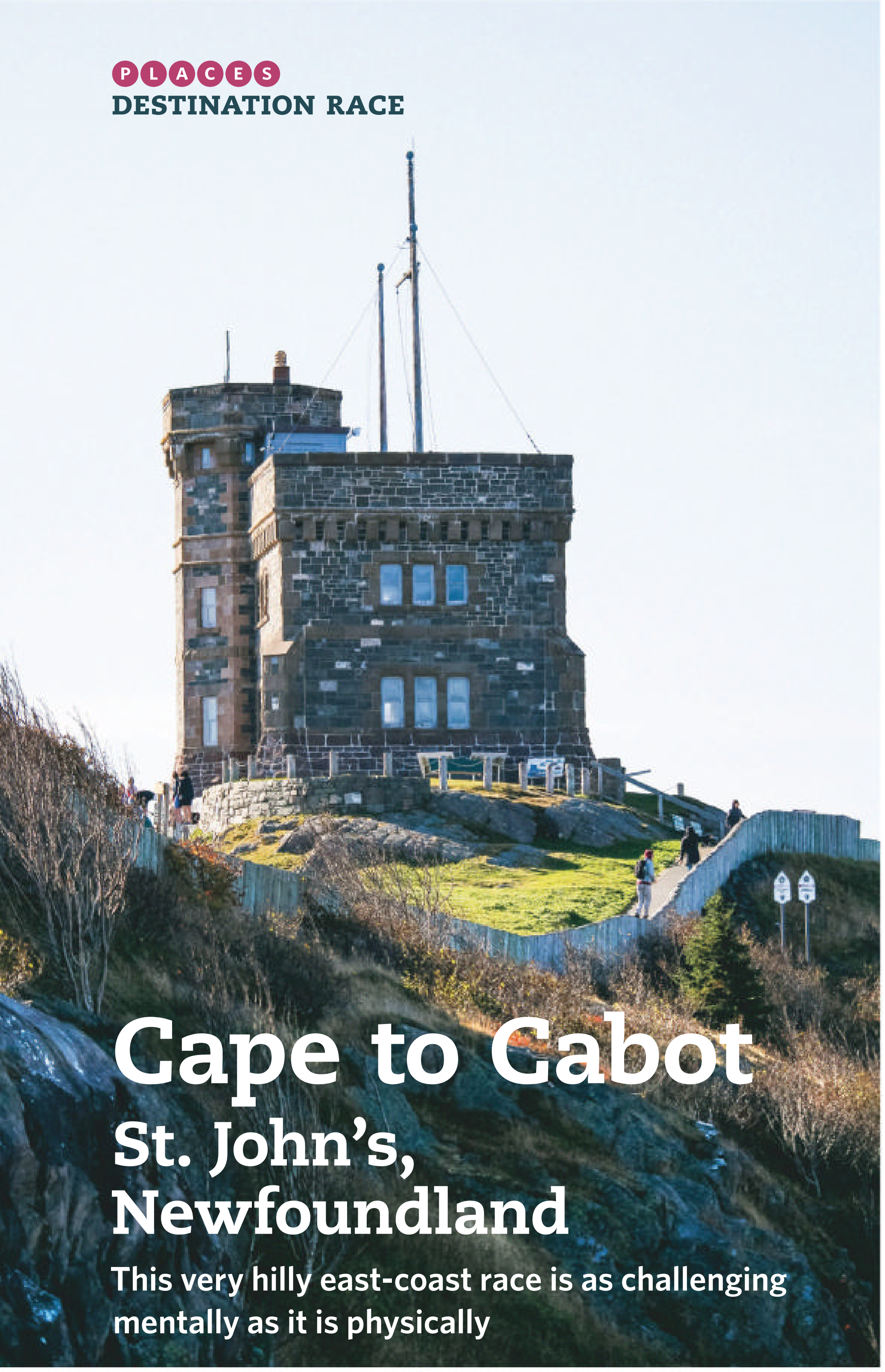


Cape to Cabot

St. John's, Newfoundland

This very hilly east-coast race is as challenging mentally as it is physically

ABOVE Cabot Tower

OPPOSITE BOTTOM Cape Spear lighthouse

By Andrea Hill

On a clear day, you can stand on Cape Spear, N.L.—the most easterly point in Canada—and gaze north across the Atlantic to Cabot Tower, perched atop Signal Hill. It's less than 10 kilometres away as the crow flies, but making the journey on land is nearly twice the distance, with constant climbs and descents.

The obvious challenge of the undertaking is what inspired Guy Beazley and more than a dozen of his running friends to tackle the point-to-point route one November morning in 2006. "It was very difficult," Beazley recalls, "but everybody seemed to enjoy the experience."

The following year, they applied for a slightly revised route to be sanctioned by the Newfoundland and Labrador Athletics Association, adding a short out-and-back in the middle to bring the total distance to 20 kilometres. These days, the Cape to Cabot road race regularly sells out its 500-person field.

Buses take participants from the finish at Signal Hill to the race start at Cape Spear National Historic Site. "There are no houses around," says Beazley. "You can hear the surf pounding against the rocks and smell the saltwater air." Once the gun goes off, runners head west, charging downhill before encountering the first of four major climbs, which take them along rural roads and through downtown St. John's, toward Cabot Tower. In total, participants climb 550 metres—and when they're not climbing, they're descending, with

CAPITAL SUBARU CAPE TO CABOT
FINISH
CAPE TO CABOT
1:15:18
166

Courtesy C2C

only 3 km of flat running.

The steepest climb, dubbed the Munn Mile, comes right before the finish; runners' times for the Munn Mile appear separately on their official results.

The race attracts runners of all ages, with last year's event featuring two octogenarians: 86-year-old Florence Barron (who participated for her 11th year) and 80-year-old Bill Saunders. There were also 10 runners under age 20.

Sixty-two-year-old Chris Flanagan, one of eight Cape to Cabot "streakers" to have run every edition of the race since it was sanctioned in 2007, describes it as a mental challenge as much as a physical one. "You've got the ups, where you are burning one set of muscles in your legs, and the downs, where you can rest those muscles and burn a different set," the St. John's resident says.

Cape to Cabot happens in the back half of October, and runners must be prepared to tackle whatever weather blows in off the Atlantic. Some years, conditions have been gorgeous; other times, not so much. The 2014 race, which took place at the tail end of a hurricane, was particularly memorable. "There were road washouts, and we were jumping over streams that were running across the road," Flanagan says. "It wasn't dangerous, but it was tricky to navigate, and incredibly fun." Regardless of weather, Newfoundlanders come out to support the runners. There are aid stations throughout the course, and a cheer zone along the entire Munn Mile.

Most of the Cape to Cabot field tends to be Newfoundlanders (including a couple of moose that sprinted across the course in 2019), but Beazley estimates 40 to 50 people a year "come from away" to run it. Flanagan encourages people to make the trip. "This is the best running race I know of," he says. "It may not give you a personal best, but it's going to give you memories you won't forget." R

Andrea Hill is a marathon runner who works for Postmedia News in Ottawa.

DESTINATION
ST. JOHN'S
NEWFOUNDLAND

Cape to Cabot

DATE Oct. 19, 2025
DISTANCE 20 km
FEES $80 plus a $5 day-permit fee for those who aren't members of the Newfoundland and Labrador Athletics Association
PARTICIPANTS 500
TRAVEL Fly into the St. John's airport
WEBSITE *capetocabot.com*

Funchal Marathon

Madeira, Portugal

This scenic race makes the perfect start to a sub-tropical island vacation

By Shannon Lough

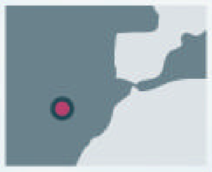
The Funchal Marathon in Madeira invites athletes to experience running on an active volcanic island in the north Atlantic, where exotic flowers thrive and terracotta-roofed houses cling to cliffs. (Don't worry—the volcano hasn't erupted since 2014.)

Created by volcanic eruptions five million years ago, Madeira is the exposed top of a massive shield volcano that rises about six kilometres from the ocean floor. In 1418, Portuguese explorer João Gonçalves Zarco spotted the uninhabited island, and today, about 250,000 people call this subtropical paradise home.

The landscapes are steep, with villages set in V-shaped valleys amid terraced farms. One street in Funchal, rue da Barreira, has a 45 per cent grade. However, the marathon course is relatively flat; to reduce hilliness, the route is divided into three sections, with views of the ocean and mountains from across the city once the sun rises. The marathon starts at 7 a.m. with four laps of an out-and-back course west of the city centre; for the second section, runners travel east toward the heart of the city. The third section is two laps of cobblestone streets in the historic district, with colourful facades and landmarks, such as the 15th-century Funchal Cathedral.

Located 500 km from the African coast, historically, Funchal Bay emerged as a port of call for sailors and pirates to seek shelter and resupply their ships with fresh water, food and supplies. Today, locals welcome cruise ships and two million tourists each year. In January,

DESTINATION
MADEIRA, PORTUGAL



Funchal Marathon

DATE Mid-December 2026 TBA
DISTANCES 42K, 21K, 8K
FEE €85, €40, €17.50
PARTICIPANTS 315 for full marathon, 490 for half-marathon
AVERAGE TEMPERATURE 19 C
TRAVEL Madeira is a 1.5-hour flight from Lisbon, which is a 7-hour flight from Toronto. There are many hotels and rental car companies and transit systems.
WEBSITE *madeiramarathon.com*

Enyo Freitas, Enyo Freitas, Shannon Lough

during the mild winter climate (with a daily average of 19 C), the marathon appeals to international runners escaping winter.

The Funchal Marathon attracts more international participants every year. The marathon, half-marathon and mini-marathon (8 km) events started in 2015 with 942 participants, including 84 international runners. By 2024, it had 1,251 participants, almost half from elsewhere. Only nine Canadians competed last year.

The island is known for its bananas, which can be seen growing around the city, and will be available at the hydration stations located 5 km apart during the race. Although you'll pass the *mercado dos lavradores* (farmers' market) during the race, it's worth visiting at a slower pace, when you can sample the four different kinds of passion fruit grown on the island.

There is so much local cuisine to explore after the race. Fill up on *bolo do caco*, a flatbread that can be filled with meat and cheese, or taste grilled limpets seasoned with garlic and butter. Try *poncha*, the island's traditional rum-based drink made with fresh orange and lemon juice and honey (rumoured to have been invented to fight scurvy).

While you're in Madeira, spend at least a week exploring the 150-km coastline. Rent a car, take the bus or join a tour. Drive through tunnels (there are more than 150), walk along the *levadas* (aqueducts), step into the Laurissilva Forest (an ancient rainforest and UNESCO World Heritage Site) or ease achy muscles with a dip in a volcanic swimming pool.

Shannon Lough is a writer and yoga instructor based on Ontario's Lake Huron coast. Her long-term running habit has taken her up mountains, along rivers and across islands.

Shannon Lough, Shannon Lough, Shannon Lough, Nelson Martins

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SPRING TRAINING BLITZ

YOUR FIRST RACE OF THE SEASON IS ON THE HORIZON. GET TO THE STARTLINE RACE-READY WITH THESE 14 TIPS FROM PROS

By Molly Hurford

It happens every year: you think you have plenty of time between winter training and your first race of the season, but suddenly, you realize there are only a few weeks left before the big day. Is it possible to get race-ready in just a couple of months (or a few weeks)? Good news: it is. Bad news: you've probably been approaching it wrong (by trying to cram in too much training of the wrong type in the time that remains).

We chatted with a run coach, a dietitian, a physiotherapist and a mental performance coach to get you to your goal race, ready to run a personal best—or at least put in an effort you can be proud of. Whether you're prepping for a 5K, 10K, half-marathon or even a marathon this spring, here's what you should be thinking about—and doing—right now.

RESIST THE URGE TO GO "ALL IN"

Yes, we're talking about getting ready for race day in a compressed window, but that doesn't mean going from 0 to 100 in a week. As the snow melts and it gets easier to run outside, the temptation is to drastically increase your mileage and speed. Instead, you should increase mileage by no more than 10 per cent per week, or risk injuring yourself and not being able to race.

"I see a lot of injuries when people really ramp up too quickly and don't allow their tissues time to adapt to this new load," says Mel Silver, a Collingwood, Ont.-based physiotherapist who works with a lot of runners with big goals.

Ultrarunner and coach Jenny Quilty of Chilliwack, B.C., suggests starting with a quick audit of what you have been doing. Assuming your body is feeling good and you've been keeping your general fitness base up (even if only via cross training, walking or hiking), you can begin to shift into a training plan that's a blend of easy runs, some speedwork and a weekly long(er) run.

GET SPECIFIC WITH YOUR TRAINING

"Start to think about what you've already been doing and how that relates—or doesn't relate—to your race," Quilty says. "Then, make small, incremental changes to work toward your race specificity. So, if it is a road race, and you've been cross-country skiing or trail running, shift to the road for a couple of days per week, to start. When coming back to running, I suggest starting with just three days per week of running, plus cross-training, and gradually adding more run days once your body gets used to the impact."

When you're trying to build up to race day in a compressed window, Quilty suggests looking at the race's course profile. Is it hilly? You're going to want to have hills on most of your runs. If it's all flat pavement, do your training on—you guessed it—flat pavement.

SET STRATEGIC EXPECTATIONS

"Your race plan needs to match your preparation," says mental performance coach Sonya Looney of Squamish, B.C. "If your preparation is not where you want it to be, you need to set reasonable goals and expectations for your race, based on what that is, rather than basing them on your best-ever race finish. Maybe instead of trying to go as fast as you know you're capable of,

TRUST THE PROS

JENNY QUILTY, ultrarunner and coach (Chilliwack, B.C.)
MEL SILVER, physiotherapist (Collingwood, Ont.)
STEVIE LYN SMITH, registered dietitian (Buffalo, N.Y.)
SONYA LOONEY, mental performance coach (Squamish, B.C.)

your goal is to be as consistent as possible with your times."

Especially with the first race of the season, where there are a lot of unknowns, it's better to keep your expectations conservative. "It's important to have stretch goals, but it's better to outperform your expectations than to set your goals too high, go out too hard and then let yourself down—or not even finish," Looney adds.

DON'T SKIMP ON FUEL

"The rule is that as training volume and intensity go up, eating goes up," says registered dietitian Stevie Lyn Smith of Buffalo, N.Y. "Your body is going to have more recovery demands as you get back to regular training. The biggest gap I see is in post-workout fuelling, because people get distracted and busy. But if you skip that snack or meal, you end up being in a deficit, and you're not optimizing your recovery—so you're not setting yourself up for race-day success."

She suggests making sure that your post-run meal is a mix of protein and carbohydrates, whether that's a chicken wrap, a smoothie, or even chocolate milk and a banana. "The carbs help replenish muscle glycogen (the stored form of carbohydrate) and protein is key to muscle recovery."

GO LONG TO GO SHORT

One longer weekly run is a staple of most training plans, even if your goal is a 5K. But what constitutes a long run will depend on your race distance and your goals. For distances up to the half-marathon, you can build up to running the full race distance for your long run (experienced runners will go beyond this), and for 5K and shorter, your long run can extend well past five kilometres.

"With these long runs, we're looking at developing the aerobic base; we are also using them to prepare for the fatigue, the fuelling and the mental components of racing these distances," says Quilty. "For shorter race distances, you may even add speedwork to your long runs, where you do a portion of the run at your race pace. For an experienced half-marathoner, you may do some 10K-type efforts toward the end of an 18-km long run, in order to work on maintaining your form while fatigued." If you are new to the half-marathon and running 21 km in a day would be a huge leap for you, she adds that aiming for a long run of 16 km in your first build is a great goal. (See sidebar, above.)

LONG-RUN DISTANCE

Not sure what your longest run should be? In the weeks leading up to your race, aim to build your long run up to this range. You won't hit it every week; the goal is to build up to it by the time you're about three weeks out. So, if you're racing a 10K at the end of May, you'll want to do your longest run of 16 km by early May.

Race Distance	Longest Run
5K	5 km to 10 km
10K	10 km to 16 km
Half-marathon	16 km to 21 km

ADD SPEEDWORK GRADUALLY

For distances up to the half-marathon, speedwork is your best friend—even if you're a newer runner who just wants to finish the race. Most runners opt out of speedwork during the winter, so Quilty notes that it's important to add it in slowly, rather than trying to hit kilometre splits that you were running last season.

"Especially when you're a multi-sport athlete, you can be aerobically and muscularly fit enough to truly trash yourself, because your bones and tendons may not be ready for the impact of running," she says. "It is really important that you take it slow, and think about sprinkling in speed in tiny amounts, to start. Let go of your ego, and skip checking your pace for the first couple of speedwork sessions."

She suggests starting with hill strides—20- to 30-second bursts of speed going uphill—because hills create less impact on the body, and you can get a higher power output. Look for a gradual hill (not a steep climb) and aim to do four sets of 20-second efforts, with a gentle shuffle down as recovery. Make sure you're able to do that without feeling any soreness the next day before progressing to more intensive speedwork. From there, she suggests extending the hill interval to a minute, or shifting to 30-second strides on flat surfaces.

DIAL IN YOUR RACE-DAY FUELLING

For any race, you're going to need a fuelling plan. While you probably don't need to bring a gel or water with you for a 5K or 10K (it will be available on the course if you need it), you should definitely eat a pre-race meal that sits comfortably in your stomach a couple of hours before your race, so you need a plan. Quilty suggests practising your race-day fuelling, from breakfast to post-run, during your long runs each week. Carry any water and fuel you plan on using during the race (or check what will be available at aid stations, and practise with that). It's also a good idea to time at least one run each week with your race's start time, so you can practise the best time to eat breakfast on race day.

"Coming out of winter, a big thing is hydration," adds Smith. "It's not as intuitive to hydrate when it's cold out, but you still need to be drinking before, during and after your runs. Even when it's cold, you're still sweating underneath all those layers. Staying hydrated year-round is only going to make you feel better."

PRACTISE RACE DAY

In the same way that it's good to practise race-day fuelling before the big day, it's also important to dial in your race-day clothing. "Think about what you're going to wear on race day," says Quilty. "And if you're racing in the same climate as where you live, start wearing that for some runs," says Quilty. "If you're racing in a warmer location, try running on the treadmill in your shorts at least once. It's hard to go from wearing tights and warm socks to a hot climate and shorts, so you need to test that gear."

Dial in as many details as possible. "Are you having caffeine before your race? Start trying that before your runs," says Quilty. "Focus on the controllable factors that you can practise now."

CHECK IN WITH A PHYSIOTHERAPIST PRE-EMPTIVELY

“The healthiest runners I know are the ones who are proactive,” says Silver. “That can look like going to a physiotherapist, a massage therapist or a chiropractor regularly, or even just checking in with a physiotherapist in the early season to assess any potential niggles or weak areas. So much of having a good race comes down to being at the startline injury-free, and that’s not always easy.”

Too often, Quilty sees athletes working on mobility when they actually need to build strength, and vice versa. A physiotherapist can help you develop a strength and mobility routine that you can do at home and that targets your weak spots.

GET THE RIGHT SHOES

While you don’t need supershoes (running shoes with carbon plates in the soles designed specifically to make you faster on race day), the shoe you’re running in does matter. The impact from regular running places big demands on your footwear, so you want a pair that is designed specifically for running—otherwise you risk muscle soreness or injury. Casual sneakers usually don’t provide proper cushioning or support, so the more you run, the greater your risk of injury and discomfort, says Silver.

If you’re new to running and don’t own a pair of running-specific sneakers, head to a local run shop that can do an assessment of the best size and style of running shoe for you and for the race you’re running. (If you’re on a tight budget or are new to running, make that clear, and don’t let the salesclerk talk you into buying different pairs for training and racing; that can come later, if you decide to train and race more frequently.)

SOLIDIFY YOUR STRENGTH

This is not the time to pile on strength training, but continuing strength training from the off-season or starting a simple, short strength routine can help increase your injury resistance. If you’re new to strength training, Quilty suggests working with a physiotherapist to develop a routine that’s right for you.

She also suggests keeping any strength routine as simple as possible. “Start with a short routine that you can actually stick to,” she says. “I think the mistake endurance athletes make is that we want to do the cool thing, or the fancy program that looks really

TRAINING SCHEDULE

If you're new to running or you've never followed a training plan, here's a simple structure Quilty recommends:

Weekly Structure

Monday	rest
Tuesday*	run easy
Wednesday	speedwork
Thursday	run easy
Friday	rest
Saturday	run long (see sidebar on p.32)
Sunday	run easy (or gentle aerobic cross-training, e.g., walk, hike, bike)

*If only running 3 days per week, skip Tuesday's run and do Wednesday's workout on Tuesday, then rest on Wednesday

Race Distance	**Weekly Training Volume Range**
5K	**3–5 runs/week, spaced throughout week:** 2–3 x 15–30-minute easy runs or run/walks; 1 x 20–60-minute run with speedwork (strides, or hill strides to start); 1 x long run (longer than midweek runs, up to 10 km; it's OK to include walking here, if needed)
10K	**4–5 runs/week, spaced throughout week:** 2–4 x 30–60-minute easy runs or run/walks; 1 x 30–60-minute run with speedwork; 1 x long run (longer than midweek runs, up to 16 km)
Half-marathon	**4–6 runs/week, spaced throughout week:** 3–4 x 30–60-minute easy runs or run/walks; 1 x 45–75-minute run with speedwork; 1 x long run (building up to 18 km for newer runners, 21–25 km for more experienced runners)

TIP: If you're nervous about completing the distance, or—on the flip side—you're gunning for a personal best, consider working with a coach to develop a plan that's tailored to your current fitness level and schedule.

fun. But you really just need a weekly routine that includes a push, pull, squat, carry and hinge exercises—which can be a pushup, chin-ups, squats, farmer's carries and deadlifts. And start with lighter weights than you think you need and see how you feel the next day."

Don't start a new strength routine if you're less than six weeks out from your race; save it for after the race. And reduce your routine in the two weeks leading up to your race, so you're fully recovered for race day.

PAY ATTENTION TO COMMON INJURY RED FLAGS

"I always tell people that pain is the last sign of dysfunction," says Silver. "Don't ignore those little niggles. If you're feeling like you're not balanced as well on your right leg, or you notice some numbness and tingling in your left calf, or you notice a new restriction in your range of motion, those are signs that you shouldn't ignore. Pay attention to these things and get help for them before they become painful."

"If those tiny injuries get to the point where they're painful, are you going to be able to recover from that before the start line?" she adds.

DIAL DOWN LIFE STRESS, DIAL UP RECOVERY

Want to have your best race ever? It's not about upping your mileage, it's about lowering all your other life stressors. "Start to think about controlling your life stressors as race day approaches," says Quilty. "Are you sleeping enough? Are you eating enough? Are you hydrating enough? What are you doing for recovery? When you get into crunch time, you're going to see better results from focusing on your recovery versus adding more training? Because you don't have enough time to adapt or gain the benefits of that training."

"This becomes even more critical as we get older," adds Silver. "In your 20s, you don't pay as much attention to nutrition and sleep and hydration. But as you age, you don't recover as quickly. I can't stress enough how important it is to prioritize sleep the same way an elite runner would."

CRUNCH TIME AND TOTALLY UNPREPARED?

If you're reading this, you've been mostly in hibernation mode and your race is only a couple of weeks away, don't panic. "Focus on small changes," suggests Quilty. "Get your body moving, run when you can without increasing your mileage drastically and focus on your other controllables. If you can go into your race more recovered, having eaten and slept well the week before, you're going to have a better race than if you run those couple of weeks at the highest volume you've done in months." She suggests that, if you took the winter off, you start with 20-minute run/walks to get your body used to running again, and build from there.

"You can't 'panic train,'" says Looney. "Your body doesn't work that way. So what are other things that you can do that will help benefit you in the race? Getting your nutrition dialled, getting your clothing dialled, being prepared for whatever weather conditions there might be, working on those mental skills, these are all things you can work on in a short period of time that will make a big difference and won't leave you injured on race day."

Molly Hurford is a fitness and nutrition writer, ultrarunner, author and founder of Strong Girl Publishing. She lives and trains in Collingwood, Ont.

THE ESCAPE ARTIST

Quinton Jacobs's community-based ultra relays have made him a figure of some renown in southern Ontario's running community. As he prepares to stage his most ambitious running project to date, we learned a little about what drives him and what he hopes to leave behind

By Paul Baswick

Jen Ng

QUINTON JACOBS'S passion for community-building has grown too big for one continent to hold.

The Torontonian's gift for using running to bridge gaps among people and places has shone through his volunteer work for many years, but especially in the last six, as organizer of the Escape series of ultra relays. Starting with Escape to New York in 2019—an ultra relay fundraiser from Toronto to the Big Apple (with a running of the New York City Marathon as the cherry on top)—the series has snowballed, rolling into Chicago in 2021 and Boston in 2023.

People at these events have clamoured for the series to spring into sequel mode. "As soon as we finished New York, we had people wanting to know when the next Escape to New York was happening," says Jacobs.

But while the Lululemon brand ambassador is every bit as accommodating as he is athletic, he has bigger plans. In late March, Jacobs—bolstered by a growing network of friends, athletes and partnering organizations—will steer the series' ambitious expansion into South Africa with Escape to Cape Town.

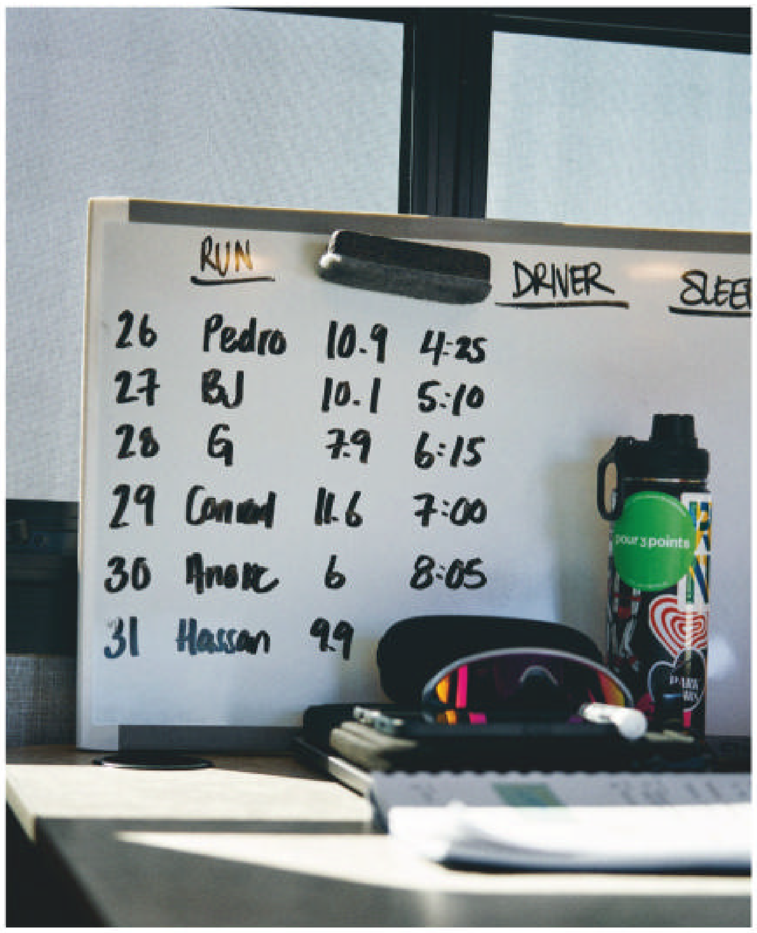
It's a massive undertaking, with many layers: a 950-km non-stop run from Shark Rock Pier in Gqeberha to Cape Town's waterfront; completing the country's famed 56-km Two Oceans Marathon as a "victory lap;" a children's 5K race in the vibrant, but impoverished, community of Mitchells Plain, on the outskirts of Cape Town; a mural project showcasing the talents of local artists; and ultimately, the construction of a running track for the young athletes of Mitchells Plain.

Along with all this, Escape to Cape Town offers something of a window into the machinery that drives Jacobs in his work of promoting sport, building community and helping to create enduring memories for participants, supporters and the local community.

A fresh challenge in familiar surroundings

Jacobs is no stranger to South Africa. Pivotal events in his family history have played out there, from the birth of

Jason Dam



his mother in Cape Town to his engagement to his wife, Britt Jacobs, at Chapman's Peak (the couple got married in December). It's also where Jacobs ticked off one of the big boxes on his running bucket list, when he and a group of friends completed their first Comrades Marathon, the world's oldest and largest ultramarathon, in 2018.

It was on a followup trip to South Africa and the Comrades start line in 2023 that Jacobs planted the seeds for Escape to Cape Town.

"In a sneaky way, I was kind of whetting the appetite of some of the friends that were with us," Jacobs says. "I showed them Chapman's Peak and introduced them to what South Africa felt like—without telling them that my intention was to run the next Escape there. When we came back in the fall, I sort of let it out—what if we brought Escape off the continent and over to South Africa?"

It was a decision spurred, in part, by Jacobs's blunt disinterest in repeating past challenges.

"Escape has been about trying a new route, reaching out to a new community. When you wipe the slate clean—pick a new location, a new distance—you can kind of tell a new story, meet new people and see a new landscape."

THE WORKER HANDLING YOUR NUCLEAR FUEL AND THE PERSON PLANNING YOUR ULTRA NEED JACOBS'S STRONG COMMUNICATION SKILLS AND KEEN EYE FOR DETAIL

An idea is born

More than the product of athleticism and philanthropy, Escape to Cape Town is a work of imagination. It offers a vivid snapshot of where Jacobs is in his journey as a runner, and hints at just how far he's come over the past decade. An obsessive runner who was laser-focused on split times and PBs, Jacobs saw his world—including his relationship with running—shaken to its foundations by his divorce in 2015. "I went through a dark period of my life when running became my solace," he says. "I'd literally just go out for runs and cry."

Jacobs found running's power to heal was heightened when he used it to connect with others. He drew from his experience with organizations including St. Felix Centre (an inner-city community centre in Toronto) and Start2Finish (a reading and running program for at-risk youth) to guide him in exploring new opportunities.

In 2018, Jacobs assembled a team for Run to Montreal, the 650-km charity ultra relay from Toronto to Montreal that celebrated its eighth year in October. It was on that run that he and his friend Andrew Abley were inspired to organize an ultra relay the next year from Toronto to New York, with a running of the New York City Marathon as the finale, and the Escape series was born.

The project has touched many lives. Escape to New York raised more than $15,000 for Skylark, a Toronto-based charity that

Jen Ng, Jason Dam, Jen Ng

supports youth and families struggling with complex mental health and developmental needs. The next two iterations raised thousands of dollars for local charities in Chicago, Boston and connecting communities along the relay routes.

For their South African odyssey, the Escape crew has partnered with Run4Schools—a program that has funded several job programs and community projects in Mitchells Plain—to raise funds toward the construction of the new athletics track in the community, which Jacobs hopes will be completed this fall.

Among the more than 70 runners from around the world who will be taking part in the various stages of Escape to Cape Town will be members of Cool Runnings Recreational Club and Must Love Hills, two host running crews based in the destination city.

"With Escape, you've got this crew that comes with you, but you've got this whole other team of people receiving you when you arrive," Jacobs says. "We love this idea of setting off from one community and connecting with another—of falling into family."

"One finish line's not enough"

An even more ambitious project than the past Escape events to New York, Chicago and Boston, Escape to Cape Town shares a common framework with its predecessors—an ultra relay to the destination city's premier running event, in this case the Two Oceans Marathon.

"I like to say one finish line's not enough," says Jacobs.

The project, set to begin March 31 and continue for four days and nights, will see each runner rack up around 100 to 160 km, broken up into legs of about 10 km. A big part of his job will be supporting team members, but that, he says, doesn't mean sitting still. "Even though I'm taking care of logistics, I anticipate jumping in and taking on mileage to help the team's collective effort. Sometimes a runner's mileage helps to buy precious sleep time for others—a real gift on nights three and four."

He's therefore had to squeeze some decent training runs into his busy schedule as Escape's organizer. "My training is afoot and I've already run four runs over 30 km in the past month," Jacobs said in early January. "Britt and I even ran a 30 km run in Moorea [an island just off Tahiti in French Polynesia] for our honeymoon."

To Jacobs, finish lines aren't merely dots on a map. Escape to Cape Town reflects his belief that the goals of the Escape series involve much more than reaching a physical end point.

In addition to the Cape Town project's three conventional finish lines—those of the ultra relay, the kids' 5K in Mitchells Plain on April 3, and the Two Oceans Marathon (including the full 56K course on April 5 and the half-marathon on April 6)—the adventure is aimed at directing participants toward authentic connections with some of the people and places of South Africa.

"We're running through and past some really impoverished areas on the way to Cape Town," he says. "It's such a beautiful country, but the beauty to me is in the layers.

"It's got a complicated history, with apartheid…I wanted to make sure people weren't just going to take away the version of Cape Town that tourists see—you know, Table Mountain, Chapman's Peak—that they actually taste and feel the parts of South Africa that, to me, are special."

Escape to Cape Town also reflects Jacobs's philosophy that what you take from an experience isn't nearly as important as what you leave behind.

"That's the idea behind the mural project," he adds. "When we do the kids' 5K in Mitchells Plain, we've got some local artists who will be doing murals that include some of the kids' faces. It's a way of immortalizing this event, so that long after we're gone, there's this sort of lasting memory. The kids will be able to see their faces mixed in with those of some of the Escape crew. Every time they see it, they'll remember this.

"The farther reach is the goal to build a track there. To build something like that, we need a lot more time, especially in South Africa, where politics can get in the way. But the money we hope to raise will go toward a track that will be built in Mitchell Plain, and

oston's Best
ot Chocolate

OPPOSITE AND ABOVE Escape to Boston

TOP Escape to Paris

Jason Dam, Jen Ng

we plan to go back and visit them to do a ribbon cutting when it's done."

Balancing fission with vision

Planning and executing the Escape series seems like it would demand the efforts of a full-time professional events co-ordinator, but Jacobs is pulling this off on his own time, while working full-time as a nuclear fuel technician. "I train fuel inspectors, and we analyze fuel inspection data from the power plants," he says. "I'm not particularly passionate about it, but I had kids young, and kids gotta eat..."

There's an apparent overlap of skill sets between his professional and volunteer roles; the worker handling your nuclear fuel inspection and the person planning the ultra you've committed to in a distant country had both better have Jacobs's strong communication skills and keen eye for detail, or there's bound to be trouble.

However, keeping his professional life and passion projects otherwise compartmentalized has been key to the growth of the Escape series, he says.

"I think it's been a blessing that because the stuff I do outside of work is not my bread and butter, I can arrive at it more authentically," he adds. "I make decisions differently, and I know if it was my job, I would approach Escape as an event in a much different way. It's literally just to fill my heart cup."

Operating Escape as a volunteer non-profit project has given Jacobs the freedom to "say no to big sponsors, so I can stay very rooted in the vision of what Escape is meant to be—a celebration of community. That, I think, is starting to resonate in how it's executed and how it's received."

Still, juggling these projects with full-time work, family (Jacobs has three teenagers) and a new marriage can't be easy. His friend Anoke Dunston, who addresses Jacobs as "Q," shares some insight into how he keeps it all together: "I think he does it better than anyone I know.

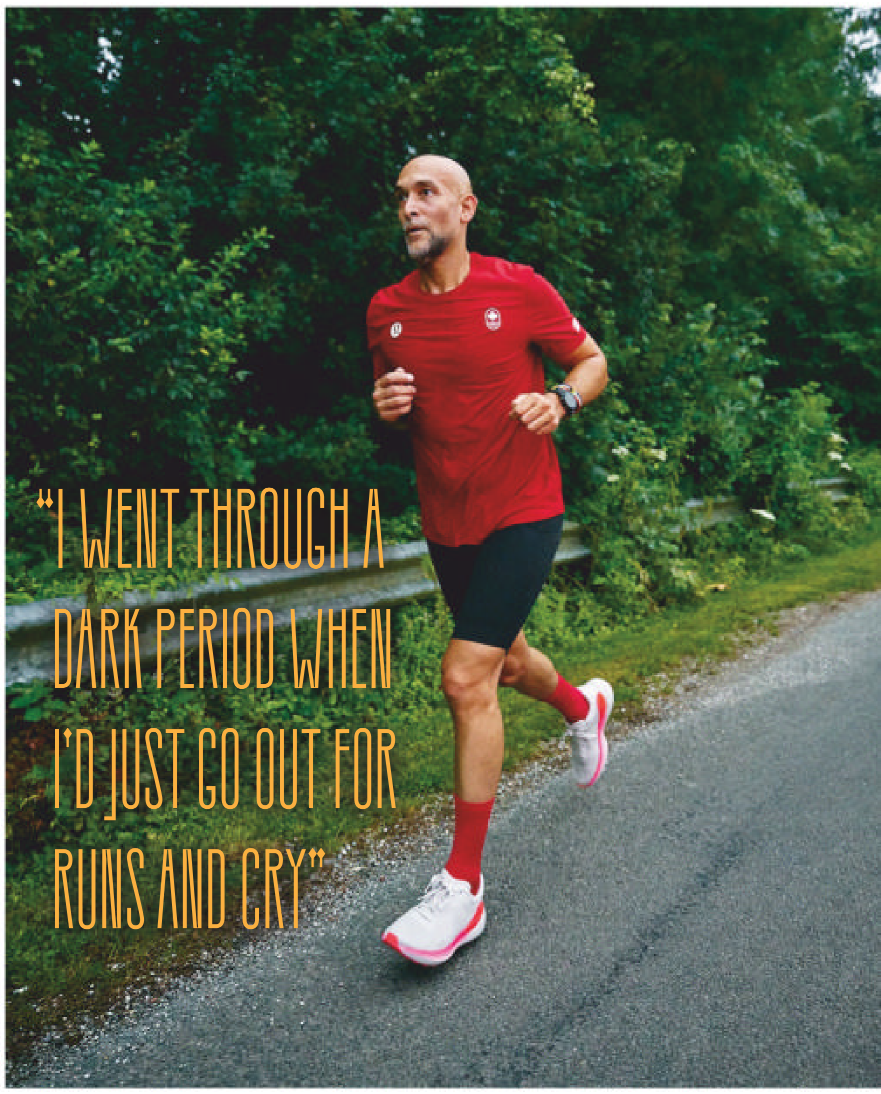
BELOW AND OPPOSITE BOTTOM Escape to New York

BOTTOM Jacobs in South Africa laying the groundwork for Escape to Cape Town

"WHAT IF WE BROUGHT ESCAPE OFF THE CONTINENT AND OVER TO SOUTH AFRICA?"

Jen Ng, Justin Manabat

127TH BOSTON MARATHON
ESCAPE
Boston



"I WENT THROUGH A DARK PERIOD WHEN I'D JUST GO OUT FOR RUNS AND CRY"

ABOVE Escape to Paris

LEFT Escape to Boston

Jason Dam, Jason Dam, Jen Ng

PARKDALE
PARKDALE
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DISCOVER THE
BRILLIANCE
OF GEMS

ESCAPE TO CAPE TOWN

DISTANCE: 950 km
START: Shark Rock Pier in Gqeberha, March 30
DESTINATION 1: Mitchells Plain (Kids' 5K), April 3
DESTINATION 2: Cape Town waterfront, April 3
DESTINATION 3: Two Oceans Marathon finish line, April 5, 6
ANTICIPATED COMPLETION OF MITCHELLS PLAIN RUNNING TRACK: Fall 2025
FOLLOW ALONG ON INSTAGRAM: @quinton_jacobs
DONATE: *givengain.com/project/quinton-raising-funds-for-run4schools-foundation-88415*

Marathon Photos

He's old school—he has a to-do list every single day, and every little thing goes on it. He buys special notebooks for his lists. He's also very selective with his time. He says no to a lot of things. But he's passionate about [his projects]—and passion will get you a long way."

Jacobs also has a lot of support at home. "In other families, running and all these things would be points of contention," he says. "But Britt's a runner and a trainer, so we look forward to the adventures we get to share together," he says.

"We mentor together, and then we do these crazy escape adventures together. We've built such an incredible network of friends—shared friends, now—that make Escape a truly collective effort."

The challenge is part of the reward

Arranging the multi-day, multi-layered Escape events doesn't come with a guarantee that things will go smoothly. Jacobs was looking forward to running in the Escape relay from Toronto to New York when he tore his Achilles tendon playing basketball, sidelining him to a support role as he kept pace with the runners in an RV.

Although he was able to roll with the punches, the growing complexity and scale of Escape means the potential for things going off-script in South Africa looms larger than ever.

"New York was a massive learning experience, and even though we did it, and did it successfully, the second time, there was no cockiness," he says. "We were super mindful of what worked, what didn't work. Still, safety is my biggest worry. People get excited and they're charged, but they're also running when they're the most vulnerable. They're super tired. Injury could set in. What if something doesn't work? What if someone gets hurt?

"Escape to Cape Town is a massive, massive project, and I take full responsibility for the people that are coming there." He adds that that responsibility extends to hiring an armed security person. "It's a bit cheeky of me to say, but the running part is kind of the easy part. The hard part is navigating all these weird kind of logistical idiosyncrasies that go with it. I enjoy the challenge of fitting all the pieces of the puzzle together."

Jacobs uses the metaphor of seasons to describe the phases his running has gone through: "Focusing on physical performance, seeing how fast or hard you can go, there's nothing wrong with that, if that's the season you're in. Running for your mental health, where there's no Garmin involved, just running for the sake of moving through time and space on your

Run4Schools

BEFORE THE ESCAPE RELAY FROM TORONTO TO NEW YORK, JACOBS TORE HIS ACHILLES TENDON PLAYING BASKETBALL

ESCAPE TO NEW YORK
LEPRECHA

own volition, that's another season. The sense of adventure is another season altogether.

"The last season, which I've been having so much fun in, is not to do with my physical health, my mental health or even adventure. It's running through other people's experience, looking at running through other people's eyes. That's why I'm so thrilled to join runners around the world for Escape to Cape Town. I'm genuinely excited for them to have this experience." R

Paul Baswick is a writer and runner who lives in Port Colborne, Ont.

OPPOSITE Quinton Jacobs and his wife, Britt, on the home stretch at the Comrades Marathon in South Africa

TOP Jacobs in South Africa laying the groundwork for Escape to Cape Town

ABOVE Escape to New York

Justin Manabat, Jen Ng

Racing Against the Odds

OUR HEAVY DEPENDENCE ON THE U.S. SYSTEM FOR DEVELOPING CANADIAN ATHLETES MAY BE JEOPARDIZING CANADA'S WINNING STREAK

By Paul Gains

SLOVENIJA
AHMED
CHITHRAVEL P
CLAYE W
Ω OMEGA

Moh Ahmed

Kevin Morris

“This is the most successful track and field team we have had since I have been on the team,” declares four-time Olympian and Tokyo 2020 silver medallist Moh Ahmed, referring to all of the major championships he has competed in since the 2019 World Championships in Doha, Qatar. “From Olympics to Olympics, we have been in the top three or four in medal tallies.”

When taking into account population size and GDP, Canadian athletes appear to be exceeding expectations. Ahmed himself claimed Olympic silver in Tokyo and the 2019 World Championship bronze medal, both at 5,000m, and finished fourth in the Paris Olympic 10,000m, missing another medal by just 33 one-hundredths of a second.

Like many of the current crop of elite Canadian athletes, Ahmed is based in the United States, training with an American coach. In 2015, after four years at the University of Wisconsin, he joined the Nike-sponsored Bowerman Track Club and moved to Oregon; he’s been there ever since.

The influence of American and foreign coaches cannot be overstated. Fourteen of the 26 medals Canadians won at the major events during the five-year period Ahmed speaks of were claimed by athletes based in the U.S. And the majority of Canadian records currently on the books were set by athletes based outside the country. It makes one wonder, is Canada not producing competent coaches? Are we too reliant on the NCAA to develop our athletes? Given the fact Sport Canada has not increased core funding for Athletics Canada since 2005, should we be surprised?

CANADIANS IN THE NCAA

Ahmed has high praise for the NCAA system and facilities: “The American pros and Canadian pros, I am telling you, they had it better in the NCAA system than they will as a professional,” he declares.

After a successful high-school career, Ahmed considered remaining in Canada, and applied to several Canadian universities, including Brock University in his hometown of St. Catharines, Ont. But in the end, he recognized he could either be a big fish in a little pond or test himself in the much more competitive NCAA system.

“The NCAA got me out of my comfort zone,” he says. “It challenged me; it made me better. It was humbling not winning. It made you go back to the drawing board to process things. It forces you to ask the right questions. If you are winning and everything is good, you might skip some steps.”

Ahmed is 34 now, and believes he can continue for a few more seasons. Other Canadian medallists, such as decathlete Damian Warner, sprinters Andre De Grasse, Aaron Brown, Brendon Rodney and Jerome Blake, pole vaulter Alysha Newman and race walker Evan Dunfee, are also all in their 30s. Who will succeed them?

The head coach of Athletics Canada, Glenroy Gilbert, acknowledges the NCAA system represents an enormous attraction to young Canadian athletes, and therefore sees co-operation between the federation and NCAA coaches as essential.

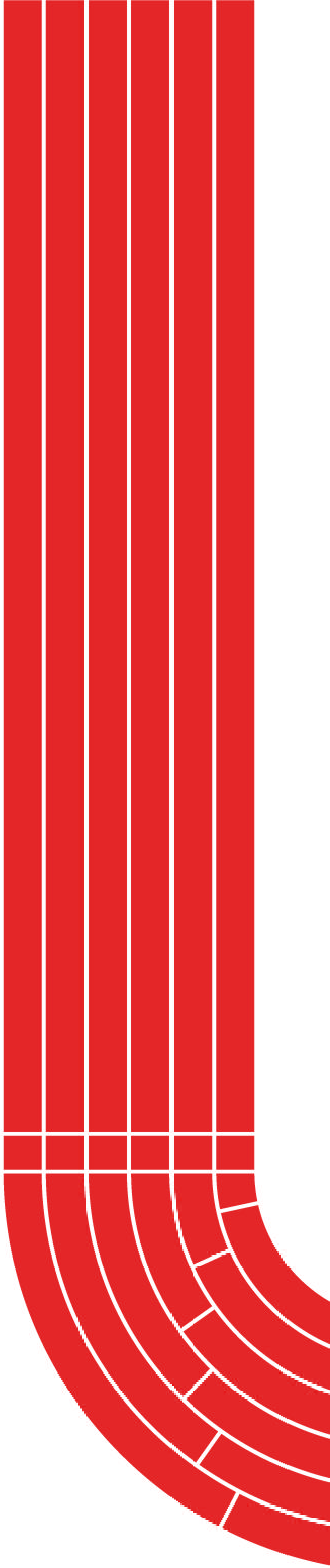
“The trick with all of this is making sure the athletes end up at a school or program that works in lockstep with our system and our program,” Gilbert says. “A lot of times, depending on where the athlete is at school, the university coach is also a part of the U.S. coaching staff for some of the benchmark events, like the Olympic Games and World Championships.

“So they are not only preparing their athletes for the conference and national championships; they are also preparing them for a post-collegiate career. So that really helps us, and helps with where we are trying to go with our athletes.”

Gilbert encourages Canadians to attend NCAA schools that emphasize longevity and a post-collegiate career, which is easier said than done. Collegiate athletes often find themselves over-racing, with little rest between the cross-country, indoor and outdoor seasons. That exacts a toll.

Consider the situation of Christopher Morales Williams of Vaughan, Ont. In 2024 he won both the NCAA indoor and outdoor 400m titles for the University of Georgia and beat Tyler Christopher’s Canadian 400m record with 44.05s—as a 19-year-old. But, in the first six months of the year, when you count heats and relays, he raced no fewer than 34 times for the Georgia Bulldogs. It was no surprise that, by the time he reached the Paris Olympics, he was fatigued, and finished last in his 400m semi-final heat.

This young talent has since elected to turn professional and remain with his coach in



14 of 26 medals won by Canadians between 2019 and 2024 were set by athletes based outside Canada

Ceili McCabe

Athens, Ga. Now he will be in a position to pick and choose races beneficial to his progress while completing his studies in ecology.

Vancouver's Ceili McCabe has, perhaps, been more fortunate. The 23-year-old represented Canada at the 2024 Paris Olympics after setting a national steeplechase record of 9:20.58 to qualify. Though she, too, had considered staying in Canada and attending the University of British Columbia in her hometown, she settled on a full scholarship at West Virginia University.

McCabe earned two third-place finishes in the NCAA 3,000m steeplechase final and was also third in the 2021 NCAA cross-country championships. During her recruitment, WVU coach Sean Cleary (himself a Canadian) assured her that her Olympic aspirations would be strongly considered in planning her collegiate career. He fulfilled his pledge by "redshirting" her during the Olympic year, i.e., she would not compete, but would keep her scholarship and save a year of NCAA eligibility. "[Sean and I] decided we wanted to be ready for the Olympics," McCabe recalls, "and, by redshirting [the outdoor season], I would then be able to come back to school to have a full slate of cross-country, indoor and outdoor seasons."

Since the Olympics, McCabe has been on a tear. In November 2024, she finished sixth in NCAA cross country, leading WVU to a second-place finish in the team competition. Just two weeks later, she ran a personal best in the indoor 3,000m (8:45.97). As she prepares for her final season with the Mountaineers, she aspires to break her own Canadian steeplechase record. And she hopes to remain with Cleary in Virginia when she eventually turns professional.

Marco Arop is another interesting example of a Canadian finding success via the NCAA. Upon leaving high school, one option was to stay in Edmonton with his club coach, Ron Thompson, and attend the University of Alberta. But ultimately, he decided to go to Mississippi State University. "I wasn't planning on competing in the U.S. or going to the NCAA until six months prior," he says. "It happened really quickly." Now one of the world's most consistent 800m performers, Arop earned 2023 World Championship gold, 2024 Olympic silver and 2022 World Championship bronze while based in Starkville, Miss.

new balance
AROP
BOSTON 24
6
Marco Arop

Arop explains his thinking while considering his post-secondary options: "One factor was having a training group and very strong competition. Also, the weather played a big factor. The big thing was getting a full-ride scholarship and being able to further my education. That wasn't something I was able to find in Canada.

"Originally, I was planning on staying in Edmonton and going to school," Arop continues. "I spent the first half of 2020 in Edmonton, training as a professional athlete, and got pretty successful, but we were unable to do any of our runs outside when the temperature was below -20 C. Whenever I have gone home during winter breaks, I have found myself getting sick, and that is not something I have had to deal with in Mississippi. To be able to train outdoors year-round, that's helped me a lot."

Athletics Canada maintains close contact with national team members while they train in the U.S. Ahmed, Arop and other non-NCAA athletes, when in need of physiotherapy, will often fly to Vancouver for treatment. And they have access to training camps paid for by the federation. In addition, Gilbert racks up a lot of air miles meeting with athletes scattered across the continent.

WHAT ABOUT COACHING?

These athletes have found a U.S. base advantageous. But it is not just our athletes who have found greener pastures in the U.S.

Edrick Floréal

Kevin Morris, Kevin Morris, Courtesy University of Texas

WHO'S WHO

Moh Ahmed
2019 World Championship bronze, 2021 Olympic silver (5,000m); fourth at Paris 2024 (10,000m)

Marco Arop
2023 World Championship gold, 2024 Olympic silver and 2022 World Championship bronze (800m)

Melissa Bishop-Nriagu
2015 World Championship silver, fourth at Rio 2016 (800m)

Jerome Blake
2024 Olympic gold, 2021 Olympic silver, 2022 World Championship gold (4x100m relay)

Aaron Brown
2016 Olympic bronze, 2021 Olympic silver, 2022 World Championship gold, 2024 Olympic gold (4x100m relay)

Tyler Christopher
2005 World Championship bronze, 2008 World Indoor gold (400m)

Andre De Grasse
2015 World Championship bronze (100m), 2015 World Championship bronze (4 x100m relay), 2016 Olympic bronze (100m), 2016 Olympic silver (200m), 2021 Olympic bronze (100m), 2021 Olympic gold (200m), 2016 Olympic bronze, 2021 Olympic silver, 2019 World Championship bronze (100m), 2019 World Championship silver (200m), 2022 World Championship gold, 2024 Olympic gold (4x100m relay)

Evan Dunfee
2019 World Championship bronze, 2021 Olympic bronze (50-km race walk), fourth at Rio 2016 (50-km race walk), fourth at Budapest 2023 (20-km race walk)

Edrick Floréal
Canadian triple-jump record holder, coach to Olympic 100m champion Julien Alfred, 2019 World 200m Champion and Olympic 4x100m relay silver medalist Dina Asher-Smith and former coach to Olympic sprint hurdles champion Jasmine Camacho-Quinn and two-time 400m hurdles champion Sydney McLaughlin-Levrone, among others; cousin to Canadian 100m record holder Bruny Surin

Glenroy Gilbert
1996 Olympic gold (4x100m relay), head coach of Team Canada

Colin Inglis
Head coach, track and field, University of Windsor

Ethan Katzberg
2023 World Championship gold, 2024 Olympic gold (hammer throw)

Adam Kunkel
Canadian record holder (400m hurdles)

Pierce LePage
2022 World Championship silver, 2023 World Championship gold (decathlon)

Ceili McCabe
2023 Athletics Canada Cross-Country Nationals gold, 2024 Olympian (3,000m steeplechase)

Stuart McMillan
Coach at Altis and former coach to Andre De Grasse

Sarah Mitton
2023 World Championship silver, 2024 World Indoor Championship gold (shot put)

Christopher Morales Williams
2024 Olympian (400m)

Carline Muir
Five-time Canadian 400m champion, 2010 Commonwealth Games bronze (4x400m relay)

Christabel Nettey
Canadian record holder and two-time Olympian (long jump)

Alysha Newman
2024 Olympic bronze (pole vault)

Dan Pfaff
Coach at Altis and former coach to Donovan Bailey, Bruny Surin and Glenroy Gilbert

Brendon Rodney
2016 Olympic bronze, 2021 Olympic silver, 2022 World Championship gold, 2024 Olympic gold (4x100m relay)

Bruny Surin
1996 Olympic gold (4x100m relay), Canadian 100m record holder, cousin to Edrick Floréal

Kevin Tyler
President of Altis, which provides high-performance coaching education

Damian Warner
2013 World Championship bronze, 2015 World Championship silver, 2019 World Championship bronze, 2023 World Championship silver, 2016 Olympic bronze, 2021 Olympic gold (decathlon)

NCAA athletes often find themselves over-racing

Edrick Floréal, better known as Coach Flo (the coach of Olympic 100m gold medallist Julien Alfred of St. Lucia) competed for Canada at two Olympic Games and still holds the national triple-jump record. He is currently one of the most sought-after coaches in the world, while fulfilling his duties as head coach at the University of Texas.

"I don't think it's best for every Canadian to come to the States," he offers. "It can be quite hard. You have got to pick the right programs. Some programs just want to get four years out of you, get the points and be done. You have got to have a coach who is going to meet your needs if you want to go pro."

Floréal spent much of his athletics career in

Melissa Bishop-Nriagu

Kevin Morris

"We were fighting for lane one with people trying to get fit, and we were trying to make an Olympic team"

Montreal, training with his cousin, 1996 Olympic sprint relay gold medallist Bruny Surin. He recalls that access to facilities was somewhat restricted: "The University of Texas has facilities comparable to the best in Canada, and they are reserved just for the collegiate team. I remember when I was training in [Montreal's] Claude Robillard Centre with Bruny, we were fighting for lane one with walkers—people just walking. They are trying to get fit, and we are trying to make an Olympic team."

His entire coaching career has been in the NCAA, and it appears his expertise has been lost to Canadians for good. With an annual salary reported to be US$500,000—more than double the leading coaching salaries in Canada—and an enviable situation in Austin, it is clear the NCAA remains a big draw for our best coaching talent.

Kevin Tyler is another example. In 2009, Tyler left what appeared to be an ideal situation in Edmonton, where he had worked with a talented group of sprinters, including Tyler Christopher (2005 World Championships 400m bronze medallist and 2008 World Indoor 400m champion), Adam Kunkel (Canadian 400m hurdles record holder) and Carline Muir (five-time national 400m champion).

Tyler first took up a position with UK Athletics, overseeing a $7-million annual budget for coaching development. In today's dollars, that's almost equal to Athletics Canada's entire budget. He also had a hand in administering a further $40-million in program funds across the United Kingdom. Since 2016, he has been president of Altis, an organization dedicated to coaching education, based in Phoenix, Ariz.

Several Canadian Olympians have trained at Altis, including sprinter Andre De Grasse and national long-jump record holder and two-time Olympian Christabel Nettey. Working alongside Tyler are American Dan Pfaff (former coach to Donovan Bailey, Bruny Surin and Glenroy Gilbert) and Stuart McMillan, a Canadian who coached Andre De Grasse in his earlier professional days.

Tyler is a huge proponent of coaching development and believes national federations must support high-performance coaches in order to promote future athlete development. "I would absolutely have been one of those people who said we should try and keep more athletes at home," Tyler says. "If you have a good grassroots pool developing in your home base, then you are going to have more young talent coming into the program, because they are going to be excited by the performances on the ground.

"What you have in Canada right now is a really good mix of some homegrown talent coached by Canadian coaches; then you have some athletes in the U.S., and some [who go] back and forth, like Marco [Arop]."

Over the past few years, athletic scholarships have been made available at Canadian universities, although not to the same degree as in the NCAA. These scholarships vary from conference to conference. Colin Inglis has coached for the past seven years at the University of Windsor in Ontario, and coached at York University for 18 years. He points out that Windsor can pay out $5,000 for athletes. If the athlete can achieve a 95-per-cent average, they are eligible for an additional academic scholarship of $4,000.

THE OUTLIERS

Inglis also argues that weather isn't necessarily the negative factor many athletes cite when choosing an NCAA scholarship over Canada. Melissa Bishop-Nriagu competed for the University of Windsor and went on to claim the 2015 World Championship 800m silver medal while living in the Windsor area. And Ahmed would surely have experienced harsher weather in Madison, Wisc., than at home in southern Ontario, considering it's at a more northerly latitude. Further, Inglis says he can expose his athletes to NCAA competition whenever needed.

"For us, our closest Canadian school is Western University—two and a half hours up the road," Inglis explains. "But two and a half hours the other way, we can hit 12 NCAA Division I track and field schools. So if we are not home, we are competing against these schools on a week-to-week basis and getting the competition. You are getting a good-quality education."

There are, of course, other athletes besides Bishop-Nriagu who have been successful remaining in Canada—mostly in the field events, where indoor facilities are acceptable alternatives to outdoor training. A few examples: decathletes Damian Warner and Pierce LePage, hammer thrower and 2024 Olympic gold medallist Ethan Katzberg, 2024 World Indoor shot-put champion Sarah Mitton and 2024 Olympic pole vault bronze medallist Alysha Newman. They are also in a position to benefit from the Athletics Canada warm-weather training camps, as they are free of NCAA obligations.

Andre De Grasse

THE CHALLENGE OF MARKETING TRACK AND FIELD

As neighbours to the country with the world's biggest economy, Canada's situation is complex. The lure of NCAA scholarships is massive, but there are other consequences.

During the Olympics, Canadians celebrate the successes of the athletes. Then it all goes dark. Many of the leading athletes return to their U.S. training sites and prepare for the next major championship in relative obscurity. Readers of *Canadian Running* excepted, it would be hard to find many folks who could identify three or more Canadian athletics stars.

During the Olympics, Canadians celebrate the successes of the athletes. Then it all goes dark

Marketing of the sport in this country has in recent years proven difficult. Despite the relatively healthy status at the high school level (Ontario's OFSAA and B.C.'s high school championships regularly receive nationwide attention), track and field struggles for relevance against a backdrop of truly professional sports. "It's not lost on me that track and field is a niche sport," Ahmed says. "We have these conversations about making (the sport) professional and creating more leagues—quick fixes! But again, I have only been in the sport for the last 15 years; I have been a pro for 10 of them. It's always the same conversation; people come up with ideas that have already been explored."

Athletics Canada supports a national track tour, which includes 11 high-performance meets. Two of the meets (the Harry Jerome Classic and the Edmonton Athletics Invitational) are labeled World Athletics Continental Tour Silver meets, and offer roughly $75,000 in prize money across several events.

Four other meets—in Montreal, Guelph, Ont., London, Ont., and Windsor—are World Athletics Continental Tour Bronze, offering $25,000. They provide national-class, rather than world-class, competition—but, more importantly, they provide World Athletics points to help with Olympic and World Championship qualification. Sadly, spectator attendance is minimal—less than 2,500, in most cases. That's in stark contrast to the Canadian indoor circuit of the 1980s and 1990s, when crowds of 5,000 to 18,000 were common. Granted, athletics meeting attendance has declined worldwide.

The National Track Tour events are livestreamed, but viewers must pay. Some argue it would be better to eat the production costs and give the product away, as the TCS Toronto Waterfront Marathon does. (According to Toronto Waterfront staff, 86,810 screens in 69 countries were tuned in to their 2024 event.)

As newspaper readership declines and outlets continue to reduce their budgets, coverage of the sport is also barren. Less exposure means less sponsorship, as there aren't many Canadian companies interested in working with athletes who spend the majority of their time outside the country. But that fact seems lost on many Canadian athletes (most of whom are dependent upon Sport Canada carding money), few of whom make themselves available to media, other than at championships.

Clearly, the fortunes of Canadian athletics are intertwined with the U.S. It has been a comfortable arrangement, but beginning in the 2025/2026 academic year, the NCAA will allow an increase in the number of scholarships for all sports. It is expected that the revenue-generating sports (football and basketball) will be the main beneficiaries, since some track coaches are doubtful they will have money to fulfill the additional scholarships allowed. Tyler speculates this could have an impact on Canada's future success.

"There's going to be fewer opportunities for [Canadians at] the bigger schools, and there is going to be a need for homegrown programs to continue to develop athletes with potential at home," Tyler believes. "If I was at Athletics Canada now, I would be fairly concerned about what is happening at the NCAA."

As the current crop of Canadian stars nears the end of their careers, we would do well to heed Tyler's warning.

Paul Gains is a full-time freelance journalist. He has covered 11 IAAF outdoor World Championships and five summer Olympic Games.

Spring Shoe Buyer's Guide

All your favourites updated, plus new models for spring

TRIED AND TRUE

ASICS

NOVABLAST 5

CATEGORY Neutral cushioning
MEN'S 255 g (9.0 oz.)
WOMEN'S 225 g (7.9 oz.)
OFFSET/DROP 8 mm
STACK HEIGHT 41.5 mm/33.5 mm (men's), 40.5 mm/32.5 mm (women's)
$180

The Asics Novablast, first introduced in 2019, has become an indispensable trainer for many Canadian runners. It's both sleeker and lighter than the Gel-Nimbus (which is really a long-run shoe), and now boasts a midsole made entirely of FF Blast Max—a lightweight foam that's just the right mix of bouncy and responsive. This material provides a more comfortable, more responsive and smoother ride than ever.

There are faster, more responsive shoes, but if you want to pay a reasonable amount for a shoe that you can use for everything, you can't beat the Novablast. (Miraculously, the shoe is $10 cheaper than it was before.)

With this fifth version, Asics has made the upper more breathable and tweaked the AHAR rubber on the outsole, to give it better traction. Otherwise, it's mostly unchanged from the Novablast 4.

HOKA

BONDI 9

CATEGORY Neutral cushioning
MEN'S 298 g (10.5 oz.)
WOMEN'S 264 g (9.3 oz.)
OFFSET/DROP 5 mm
STACK HEIGHT 43 mm/38 mm (men's), 42 mm/37 mm (women's)
$200

The new Bondi is all about the super-plush, max-cushioned daily training experience; it's now using a supercritical EVA in the midsole, with two additional millimetres of stack height over the previous model—but it has lost almost a full ounce of weight, which is never a bad thing (though you still wouldn't call it a light shoe). The engineered mesh upper is softer than before, with a thickly padded tongue and a redesigned heel collar (again with lots of padding). The Bondi has a very wide, stable base and will appeal to newer runners, as well as anyone looking for a softly cushioned daily trainer.

Hoka tends to fit long and narrow; the new Bondi is very snug, and you might need to go up a half size (or at least go for the wide or extra-wide version, which is now available for women as well as men—the only Hoka model that's available in X-wide).

Matt Stetson

NEW BALANCE

FRESH FOAM X 880V15

CATEGORY Neutral cushioning
MEN'S 300 g (10.6 oz.)
WOMEN'S 235 g (8.3 oz.)
OFFSET/DROP 6 mm
STACK HEIGHT 32 mm/26 mm
$180

The 880 is another very nice daily trainer with a long pedigree; it's New Balance's top-selling running shoe. Our tester likened it to a Toyota Corolla—not sexy, perhaps, but highly utilitarian; it's perfect for those who like a lot of cushioning and comfort, a wide toe box and a feeling of support without the rigidity of a stability shoe. (It also comes in four widths.)

If you've been wearing the 14, the 15 is going to feel a little different, for various reasons: first, the midsole is made of the same Fresh Foam X cushioning material as the 14's, but there is an additional 3 mm under the heel and 5 mm under the forefoot; with the toe raised, the heel/toe offset (which was 8 mm in the 14) has been lowered to 6 mm, allowing for a more efficient stride (but possibly a little more stress on your Achilles tendons). It is also stiffer in the forefoot, promoting a more springy toe-off. These are all enhancements, however it's also a full ounce heavier than the 14, and right on the cusp of what we consider to be the line between lightness and heaviness. (The stiffness is also due to the thicker outsole, which adds to the shoe's weight.)

The mesh upper is also well cushioned, with comfy memory foam in the collar and tongue. The fit is true to size.

BROOKS

GLYCERIN 22

CATEGORY Neutral cushioning
MEN'S 289 g (10.2 oz.)
WOMEN'S 258 g (9.1 oz.)
OFFSET/DROP 10 mm
STACK HEIGHT 38 mm/28 mm
$210

The latest version of the Glycerin has a higher midsole made with nitrogen-infused DNA Tuned foam; it's softer in the heel than the forefoot, to cushion your landings—a boon for newer runners and heel-strikers, though experienced runners also love the Glycerin's cushioning and reliable fit.

This is a very comfortable and pleasing update; the new engineered double jacquard warp-knit upper moulds to your foot, creating something approaching a customized fit, and you can take it for a spin right out of the box, with no breaking-in required. The Glycerin is built on a wide, stable platform, and it's reasonably light and responsive for a daily trainer.

We particularly like the knit collar and the stretchy heel loop. We're not sure the tongue needs to be quite this thick, but we were still able to achieve a good lockdown. Our tester plans to keep it in their rotation—definitely the mark of a good shoe!

SAUCONY

RIDE 18

CATEGORY Neutral cushioning
MEN'S 251 g (9.1 oz.)
WOMEN'S 228 g (8.0 oz.)
OFFSET/DROP 8 mm
STACK HEIGHT 35 mm/27 mm
$180

The Ride is a solidly reliable daily trainer with a long history of success for the brand; its breathable mesh upper with well-padded tongue and collar and plush sockliner give it the type of step-in comfort runners crave. It has a heel-to-toe drop of 8 mm, making it especially attractive for newer runners and heel-strikers. The PWRRUN+ midsole foam (a blend of EVA and TPU) is neither too firm nor too soft—this is very much a "set it and forget it" shoe—you won't be thinking about how it feels, which may be the mark of a really good shoe. The fit is narrower through the midfoot than other daily trainers, but the platform is wide and stable. (It's also significantly lighter than several other daily trainers in this review.)

We're also pleased to see the ventilation holes on the upper have been moved away from the toe, avoiding soakers. The price (a very reasonable $180) is unchanged over the previous model.

ASICS

GEL-NIMBUS 27

CATEGORY Neutral cushioning
MEN'S 305 g (10.8 oz.)
WOMEN'S 265 g (9.3 oz.)
OFFSET/DROP 8 mm
STACK HEIGHT 43.5 mm (men's), 42.5 mm (women's)
$215

The updates to Asics' much-loved long-run shoe are mainly to be found in the new, highly breathable jacquard mesh upper, with a stretchy tongue that contributes to an excellent fit. If you found the previous couple of versions a bit too snug, you're in luck, because the Nimbus just got bigger and wider. (Conversely, if you thought it was perfect before, you may now find it a little too roomy.) The new Nimbus has a thick wedge of somewhat firm FF Blast Plus Eco cushioning (the stack creeps ever higher with each iteration) on a wide, stable platform, and while the brand has dispensed with the translucent window revealing the Pure-Gel cushioning in the heel, the cushioning is still there (even though you can't see it).

Everything about the Nimbus is high-quality and dependable. For faster workouts, you'll obviously want something lighter and more responsive, but for those long marathon training runs, the Nimbus is a fine shoe.

saucony ride18
PWRRUN+

PureGEL
FFBLAST+

ALTRA

TORIN 8

CATEGORY Neutral cushioning
MEN'S 288 g (10.2 oz.)
WOMEN'S 238 g (8.4 oz.)
OFFSET/DROP 0 mm
STACK HEIGHT 30 mm
$190

The Torin is classic Altra—lots of toe room, zero drop and moderate cushioning. The eighth iteration boasts updated Altra EGO Max (compression-moulded EVA) in the midsole, which makes the shoe feel much better cushioned than in the past. The jacquard mesh upper has also been redesigned, which has made a big difference to the overall comfort of the shoe, however it fits slightly large, so you may want to try it in a half-size smaller than your usual.

These aren't radical changes; other than a slight increase in the weight—and this remains a reasonably lightweight shoe for daily training—the specs haven't changed, but our tester found the 8 significantly improved over the 7. (They even found it responded well to pace pickups.)

The shoe also comes in a Gore-Tex (waterproof) version.

Matt Stetson

NEW & INNOVATIVE

PUMA

FOREVERRUN NITRO 2

CATEGORY Stability
UNISEX 295 g (10.4 oz.)
OFFSET/DROP 10 mm
STACK HEIGHT 38 mm/28 mm
$200

The Foreverrun, introduced early last year, is a stability shoe with a well-cushioned midsole made of double-density nitrogen-infused foam (this new model is slightly higher, and a little heavier, than the original). The foam is firmer around the edges than in the centre of the midsole, providing gentle support through the gait cycle for overpronators; extra support is provided on footstrike by the rigid TPU heel clip at the back of the shoe. The platform has been made wider, making it even more stable.

The shoe has a very comfortable, stretchy and breathable engineered knit upper, and the knit collar has been updated; the upper is further stabilized with overlays in strategic areas.

It's appropriate for easy runs, long runs and recovery runs. Our tester appreciated the snug collar and heel lock, the cushioning and the support, but found the toe box confining.

BROOKS

HYPERION ELITE 4 PB

CATEGORY Neutral cushioning (plated)
UNISEX 204 g (7.2 oz.)
OFFSET/DROP 8 mm
STACK HEIGHT 40 mm/32 mm
$300

We're putting this update to the Hyperion Elite in the "new and innovative" category because of the midsole update, plus it's still only the fourth iteration of the shoe. It has a carbon-fibre plate and the maximum allowable midsole height, according to World Athletics rules. (PB stands for peba, the ultralight midsole cushioning material, but the subliminal message is that it will propel you to a new personal best.)

Like many racing shoes, it has a loosely-knit but very narrow and tight-fitting, breathable upper. This DNA Gold peba cushioning is used throughout the midsole, and is a major step up from the DNA Flash cushioning used in the Elite 3 (which is nitrogen-infused EVA). Our tester found the plate very stiff, yet the shoe felt controlled, and very propulsive and bouncy for workouts or 5K races. It's almost a full ounce lighter. Note that the price has gone up by $50.

BROOKS
HYPERION ELITE
NITRO

MIZUNO

WAVE REBELLION PRO 3

CATEGORY Neutral cushioning
UNISEX 224 g (7.9 oz.)
OFFSET/DROP 4 mm
STACK HEIGHT 39.5 mm/35.5 mm
$310

Now in its third iteration, this unusual-looking supershoe has undergone some refinements since it was first introduced in early 2023. Most notably, the heel cutout has been made even more radical, to increase the length of outsole that contacts the ground. Also, the base of the shoe has been made significantly wider and, as a result, the carbon-infused, plant-based wave plate is also wider, making the shoe more stable. The midsole cushioning material (Enerzy XP) is bouncier, as well as more responsive, and the shoe has been made slightly higher.

Our tester loved the "racy" upper and found the shoe light and stable, despite the high stack. However, they found the toe box very narrow. They also noted that the shoe rewards a midfoot strike and a fast, but controlled, pace—land too far forward and it loses its "pop," too far back and it feels less stable.

ON

CLOUDSURFER 2

CATEGORY Neutral cushioning
MEN'S 261 g (9.2 oz.)
WOMEN'S 225 g (7.9 oz.)
DROP 9 mm
STACK HEIGHT 32 mm/23 mm
AVAILABLE March 2
$200

Despite the redesigned outsole (which has been made thicker, for better durability), this updated daily trainer from On is still surprisingly light, and the rockered sole will give you a rolling gait that feels very pleasing for daily training. The heel-toe offset has been lowered by a millimetre (which you won't notice, 9 mm still being fairly high).

Unlike On's other models, the new Cloudsurfer does not have the brand's signature Speedboard, but a new "structural cushioning system" called CloudTec Phase, sitting on top of a medium-firm midsole; it might be a bit firm for a long marathon training run, but it's A-OK for your shorter daily runs, and performs well at faster paces also.

The shoe is generously wide in the toe box and across the midfoot, and the ventilation holes in the shoe's knit upper have been brought further down the sides for better breathability in warm weather. The shoe is made from 36 per cent recycled materials.

SMOOTH
SPEED
ASSIST

Matt Stetson

SALOMON

AERO GLIDE 3 GRVL

CATEGORY Neutral cushioning
MEN'S 275 g (9.7 oz.)
WOMEN'S 235 g (8.3 oz.)
OFFSET/DROP 8 mm
STACK HEIGHT 40 mm/32 mm
AVAILABLE May 1
$210

Salomon has taken a leaf from cycling's book in producing this new "gravel-tuned" version of the Aero Glide 3 road shoe (but a rose by any other name is road-to-trail).

This is one of Salomon's highest-stack trainers (for any terrain), with a thick wedge of the brand's TPU Energy Foam and a moderate, 8 mm heel-to-toe drop. The ride is soft, bouncy and very pleasing, whether you're running on the road or light trails.

The shoe is basically a light trail version of the new Aero Glide 3 road shoe (which is available Feb. 15), though it's slightly heavier, due mainly to the slightly more substantial outsole. It has a generous toe box, an internal wrap system that hugs the foot and regular flat laces, rather than the brand's QuickLace system found in some of its trail models. It also has a fully gussetted, neoprene tongue and a fairly rigid heel counter, with good protection around the toes. It performed well in very cold conditions (which makes us wonder how breathable it would be in the heat). The fit is slightly large.

UNDER ARMOUR

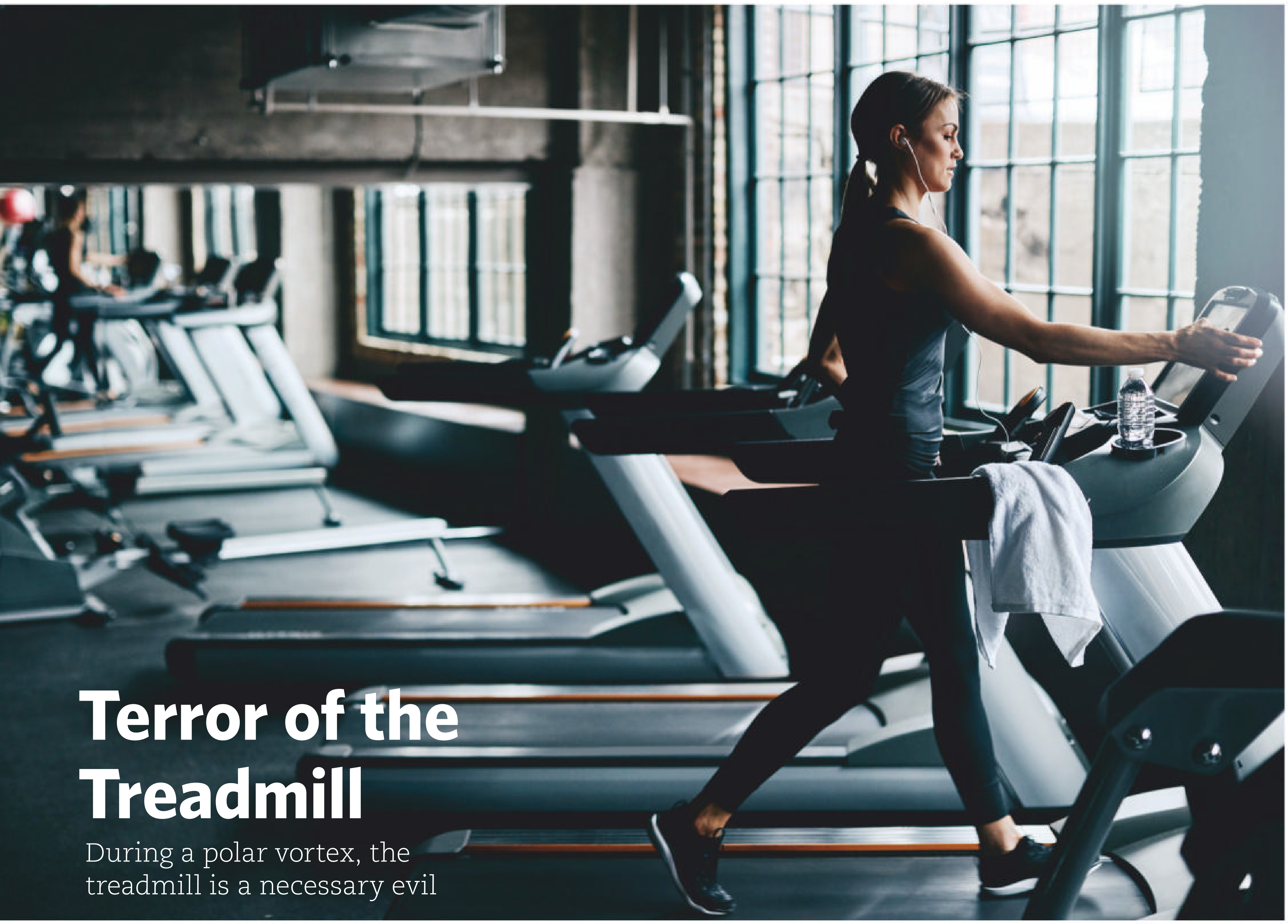
INFINITE ELITE 2

CATEGORY Neutral cushioning
UNISEX 283.5 (10.0 oz.)
OFFSET/DROP 8 mm
STACK HEIGHT 36 mm/28 mm
$200

The UA Infinite Elite, now in its second iteration, is designed for long miles, with a max-stack midsole made of HOVR+ (a beaded TPU foam) and loads of cushioning in the upper as well, from the collar to the tongue and laces. Our tester also loved the step-in comfort of the shoe's 3D moulded sockliner. The 2 is both softer, bouncier and significantly lighter (by an ounce and a half, due partly to the elimination of the TPU heel counter) than the original, but that only points up how heavy the original was; this is still not a particularly light shoe, but it's still very nice for daily training.

The upper is a beautiful, breathable engineered mesh, and you'll find yourself wearing the shoe casually as well as for running, just because it looks so good. The ghillie lacing system and broad, flat laces allow you to cinch it up nicely. We noted the 8 mm drop feels much lower—something we've noticed in other UA models, as well.

SALOMON
AERO GLIDE 3 / GRVL



Terror of the Treadmill

During a polar vortex, the treadmill is a necessary evil

By Louise Rachlis

I wrote this article in my head on the treadmill. There's not a lot to do on a treadmill. I was also listening to the audiobook of E. M. Forster's *Room with a View* at the same time (though the Women's Plus workout room in the Ottawa Y has no view). It is -18 C outside, and, at 78, I no longer want to be a winter running warrior. I'm signed up for the Gasparilla Race weekend in Tampa, Fla., in late February, so there's no point in training in the cold—that would be too shocking a contrast.

The drawback of running outside is ice to slip on, cold fingers and toes and fussed-over clothing that's too cold at the beginning of a run and too hot in the middle. The plus side is more interesting scenery, and perhaps a coffee shop at the end.

The downside of treadmills for the home is size and price—two things that keep me from making such a purchase. Therefore I must use treadmills in fitness centres and various hotel gyms, and it seems to me that they all have different controls and options. By the time I figure them out, it's time to leave. I think they were designed by the same person who designed those portable credit card terminals in restaurants. (At least on a treadmill you don't have to punch in a tip!)

Treadmill sales soared during the pandemic, but (and this is surprising to me) I read that they are still rising. The CEO of exercise company Echelon Fit was quoted last year as saying "People want to get their 30 minutes of cardio in, but they also want to watch the latest Netflix show."

I keep looking at my slowly accumulating minutes on the treadmill. Appropriately, the treadmill was invented ages ago to make animals and prison inmates work; the consumer treadmill wasn't invented by a mechanical engineer until the late 1960s.

On the treadmill, I do feel as if I'm on a countdown to my execution. What!? I've only been doing this for nine minutes? It feels like 55. (And I feel as if I'm 95.)

In 2023, New Zealand runner Emma Timmis set the Guinness World Record (her third, apparently) for the longest distance run on a treadmill in 48 hours, covering 340 kilometres. Aghhh.

In honour of our birthdays, my run group exhorts us to run for as many minutes as we have achieved in age. On the treadmill, that's inconceivable. I think 25 minutes for 2025 will be just fine—which means I'm done! The treadmill read-out even tells me I've burned more than 100 calories.

Actually, I like to call it an indoor triathlon—coffee/run/sauna—which makes it a bit better. But who knows how long this new year's resolution will last? In any case, spring is coming! R

Louise Rachlis writes and paints quickly and runs slowly in Ottawa.

NB FRESH FOAM X 1080 (TIMELINE)
FRESH FOAM

Fresh Foam X 1080

Comfortable. Breathable. Versatile.

new balance

asics
sound mind, sound body™

GEL-CUMULUS 27
PureGEL
FF Blast+
PureGEL

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アシックス

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